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Exploring and Assessing Intercultural Competence

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"Exploring and Assessing Intercultural Competence"

Final Report

of a Research Project conducted by the
Federation of The Experiment in International Living
with funding support from the Center for Social Development
at Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri

July 2005 - December 2006

[The Initial Phase of An Extended Project to Explore and Assess
Intercultural Outcomes in Service Program Participants Worldwide]

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Abstract

"Exploring and Assessing Intercultural Competence," is a research project of the Federation of The Experiment in International Living (FEIL), conducted from July 2005 through December 2006, with funding support from the Center for Social Development of the Global Service Institute at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. This project was designed as the initial phase of an extended future study, pending further funding. Its purpose was to explore and develop a comprehensive construct of intercultural competence, develop a tool for its assessment, and investigate intercultural outcomes on participants and their hosts in select civic service programs including implications for their lives and work. The study was conducted through use of a survey questionnaire followed by individual interviews, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data.

The research project is important to the Experiment Federation worldwide because it: a) engaged three Member Organizations (Great Britain, Ecuador, and Switzerland) in a learning process that will further their efforts in several areas, b) improve understanding of and further FEIL's goals and modus operandi, c) has the potential to improve delivery of its volunteer service projects (and related programs), and d) may enhance development of the intercultural competencies of future participants and possibly of their mentors and hosts as well. Finally, this effort also contributes important knowledge to the field of intercultural education regarding international and intercultural efforts concerned with the identification, development, assessment, and impact of intercultural competencies on the lives of those involved.

Key Words: intercultural education, intercultural competence, host language proficiency, service volunteers, intercultural sojourns, outcomes assessment

Ackowledgments

Executive Summary

The Project and the Participants

FEIL completed its first international research effort – a one and a half year project designed to explore and assess the impact of intercultural experiences provided through service projects conducted as part of the Volunteers in International Partnerships program. This research project involved two sending and one receiving Member Organizations: Great Britain, Switzerland, and Ecuador, and was made possible through a funding grant obtained from the Center for Social Development of the Global Service Institute at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri.

Designed and directed by FEIL's educational consultant, Dr. Alvino E. Fantini, the project began in July 2005 and was completed in December 2006, undergoing several stages: In the initial stage, an extensive survey was conducted of the intercultural literature as the basis for developing a comprehensive construct of "intercultural competence" and develop a tool for its assessment. After translating this instrument into German and Spanish, and adapting it to British English, the tool was then used with several groups – alumni, volunteers, and host mentors. The study was conducted through use of a survey questionnaire followed by personal interviews, with the assistance of research assistants employed in each of the three cooperating countries. The result was the production of an amazing amount of data, which were then analyzed to learn more about the impact of intercultural experiences on the lives and work of both sojourners and hosts.

Assertions and Findings

Although most people engaged in intercultural exchanges can anticipate the results, this systematic study yielded rich quantitative data (figures, graphs, and statistics) and qualitative data (anecdotes, comments, and quotes) that were important and insightful. The analysis of the data was based on ten assertions, all of which were strongly supported by the evidence:

- that intercultural competence involves a complex of abilities
- that learning the host language affects intercultural development in positive ways
- that intercultural experiences are life-altering
- that participant choices made during their sojourn produce certain intercultural consequences
- that all parties in intercultural contact are affected
- that service programs offer unique opportunities for sojourners and hosts, beyond traditional exchanges
- that people are changed in positive ways as a result of this experience
- that returnees lean toward specific life choices, life partners, life styles, values and jobs, as a result of their experience
- that returnees often engage in activities that further impact on others in positive ways, and
- that their activities further the organizational mission.

Although most every one engaged in intercultural activities believes these assertions intuitively and perhaps experientially, the statistics and comments obtained provide substantial evidence that strongly supports all of these assertions. For example, specific attributes were cited as extremely important to the success of an intercultural experience. Participants gained dramatic insights about the significance of being able to communicate in the host tongue, both to remove barriers as well as to enable participation. As one alumna wrote, "Language was the key to everything, to

communicating and understanding the local culture, and to my overall success." And another added: "Language was vital and very important to my success".

Alumni also made numerous comments about how their lives were changed, as well as the new directions their lives had taken after return. But what is really interesting is that the mentors were also significantly affected through contact with foreigners, reinforcing the notion that both sojourners and hosts are changed in the process. As participants return home and engage in socially oriented activities, it becomes clear that they in turn have significant impact upon others (the multiplier effect). And finally, documentation of all of these results, in turn, provides important evidence that The Experiment indeed furthers its vision and mission through its participant members.

Looking Back, Looking Ahead

In the end, this project was envisioned as an initial pilot project to be followed by an expanded research effort that might eventually involve all Member Organizations worldwide. It is clear that many benefits can accrue to collaborating MOs quite aside from the results obtained. For example, this project had several effects on participating MOs: a) first of all, it engaged three Member Organizations in a learning process that will further their efforts in several areas, b) it improves understanding of and furthers FEIL goals and modus operandi, c) it has the potential to improve delivery of volunteer service projects (and other programs as well), and d) it may enhance development of the intercultural competencies of future participants and possibly of their mentors and hosts as well. In addition, the results clearly also have marketing implications as well as program design and implementation implications, and ultimately educational and training benefits, if they are carefully considered and taken into account.

Finally, research efforts also contribute important knowledge to the field of intercultural education regarding international and intercultural programs, especially as concerned with the identification, development, assessment, and impact of intercultural competencies on the lives of all those involved. As an "acknowledged leader in international intercultural exchange," it is indeed fitting for the Experiment Federation to undertake projects of this sort – for itself and on behalf of others. For this reason, the project's final phase involves dissemination of the results through publications in professional journals and relevant conferences.

[NOTE: A complete report of this research study is also available electronically and is posted on the Federation EIL website at http://www.experiment.org]

1. Overview of the Initial Phase Project

A. About the Federation EIL

The **Federation of The Experiment in International Living** (aka: **FEIL**, or **Federation EIL**), founded in 1932, is one of the oldest and premiere international, intercultural educational organizations in the world today. Through its Member Organizations **(MOs)** – all independent, non-profit, and autonomous national entities – FEIL constitutes a worldwide network with representation in 26 countries (cf. Appendix B: FEIL and Its Member Organizations). From the very beginning, their collective **mission** has been: "**to build world peace, one person at a time**" (cf. Appendix A: FEIL's Vision and Mission Statements). Over the past three quarters of a century, several **hundred thousand individuals** of all ages have participated in FEIL programs through the combined efforts of its MOs around the world.

FEIL MOs work toward this mission by providing a variety of programs – in **education, service**, and **development**. These programs are conducted among Federation members as well as with other partners around the world that share similar beliefs and practices. To ensure consistent quality, the Federation adheres to a set of Operational Standards that guide members in their work, along with a Quality Assurance Form that serves as an ongoing review instrument.

FEIL programs are designed and conducted by at least two collaborating partners (and sometimes more in the case of multinational groups). In all educational programs, a group leader and a local representative from each host community work together as the program unfolds. In service and development programs, the addition of a mentor provides local worksite orientation and guides each volunteer throughout the service component. All FEIL programs include pre-departure orientation, host country orientation, language training, a family homestay (the hallmark of The Experiment!), and a thematic focus or a service project.

B. The Federation's Research Interests

Although touted as an "**intercultural educational experience**," little **systematic study** had been previously conducted to document exactly what transpires in an Experiment program and the effects on sojourners and hosts alike. Over the years, significant **testimony** has been accrued in the form of personal accounts, anecdotal tales, and autobiographical writings that attest to the **impact** that programs exert on the lives of those involved. This aside, however, inadequate formal research existed to document explicitly the **impact of living abroad, study abroad**, **service abroad**, and other forms of **intercultural contact** on all parties. Although few would deny the provocative and enriching nature of these experiences in producing **significant life-changes**, it was time to learn more. Moreover, given the slogan: "FEIL: An acknowledged leader in the field of intercultural educational exchange," recently adopted (Brazil General Assembly, April 2006), it was essential that thoughtful research and clearly documented evidence back up this claim.

As a result, FEIL formulated a long-term plan to conduct a **global, longitudinal, and cross-sectional research study** to investigate just this. In fact, it recognized that only by assessing the impact of programs upon participants can attainment of the organizational mission be appropriately measured. But, what constitutes this impact – i.e., what exactly are the changes and the factors responsible for them? These questions formed the basis for the issues raised in this

initial phase project that will be developed even more fully in a follow-on study. And, whereas this initial phase involved only three MOs, the full research effort will hopefully involve all member countries – **diverse in languages and cultures, geographically widespread,** and spanning a **timeframe** of activity of up to 75 years (or, as long as each MO has maintained reliable alumni records).

In this **Initial Phase Project** (IPA), the data sought were **quantitative** (statistics, collective profiles, etc.) and **qualitative** (open-ended comments, anecdotes, individual interviews, etc.). Combined data provided a rich source of information about the research issues cited above and other outcomes in terms of: the nature of intercultural competence, the identification of attributes for success in cross-cultural encounters, the degree of competence attained, the effects of the experience on participants' ensuing careers and life choices and, finally, participant **contributions** in turn to the overarching **mission** of the Federation. In addition, the project resulted in producing a more reliable instrument to measure and monitor intercultural development during and beyond a participant's sojourn.

Given this ambitious long-term plan for a worldwide research effort, the preliminary steps undertaken in this initial phase included: defining concepts, developing survey questionnaires, and several limited focus studies (cf. e.g., Hovey 2001). The results obtained from these will all help inform MOs in areas of marketing, program design, criteria for participant selection, criteria for intercultural success, improved assessment, etc., resulting in administrative and educational improvements. Given FEIL's approaching **75th anniversary,** to be celebrated on an international scale in **May 2007** in Berlin, Germany, this endeavor seemed both timely and appropriate at this moment in our history.

2. Theoretical Perspectives

The challenge of any project of this type is to formulate the basic concepts on which the entire effort was based – e.g., what exactly is "intercultural competence"? and how do we best measure and monitor it? Our starting point, then, was to hark back to an earlier notion of "**communicative competence**," a term first advanced in language education (and reinforced through other disciplines) over 25 years ago: Various abilities had been posited that comprise this competence, developed so early in life. Everyone develops the communicative competence that forms part of their native language and cultural system (CC_1), while those entering additional language-culture systems at any other time thereafter, potentially develop a second system (CC_2), or even additional systems (CC_3, $CC_{4)}$, and so on. But once the initial system is fairly well established by around puberty (reflecting and affecting one's view of the world), it becomes increasingly difficult to see things any other way – hence, the power of the intercultural sojourn in providing a chance at seeing things "anew".

To transcend one's native CC_1 (and worldview) and enter into an alternative system (CC_2), to any degree, then, requires the concurrent development of "**intercultural" communicative competence** (aka: **intercultural competence**, or **ICC**). To do this, however, demands nothing less than reconfiguring one's original worldview (or better put, "transcending and transforming" it). ICC, then, is more than a collection of abilities that allow one to function in one and another system (CC_1 and CC_2); ICC also results in producing unique perspectives that arise from interaction of two (or more) systems. Indeed, ICC is part and parcel of developing bilingual-bicultural (or multilingual-multicultural) perspectives; perspectives that no monolingual-monocultural individual of either of the two individual systems can ever possibly have.

Whereas the term ICC is increasingly used in the field of intercultural communication, it represents only one term among many that are still used to address what transpires during intercultural encounters. And even those who employ the notion of ICC at all, do not necessarily intend to signify the same abilities: A glance at some of the terms used (there are many more) helps to illustrate their diversity; yet, most terms allude to only limited aspects of a more complex phenomenon; for example: cross-cultural awareness, global competitive intelligence, cultural competence, cultural sensitivity, ethno-relativity, international competence, intercultural interaction, biculturalism, and multiculturalism, and so forth (cf. Appendix D: Alternate Terms for ICC). Some of these stress global knowledge, others sensitivity, still others point to certain skills. From our long involvement in the field of intercultural communication, we knew that most existing terms, definitions, and concepts in use do not adequately capture all that occurs when individuals engage in intercultural contact. Lacking any unifying concept, it is not surprising, therefore, that so many different instruments are being created to measure its outcomes (cf: Appendix F: Assessment Tools ICC). But the instruments themselves, of course, are only as good as the concepts they attempt to measure.

For these reasons, we began by attempting to establish parameters for an expanded notion of ICC used in this study. Expectedly, we began with an extensive review of the intercultural literature – 138 articles and books to date – to ascertain areas of convergence and divergence regarding ICC. We compared these findings with the ideas we held, informed by our academic and empirical work in the field over many years. These efforts resulted in a far more holistic and comprehensive construct than any found in the literature (cf. Appendix E: Exploring Intercultural Competence: A Construct Proposal). This construct, in turn, provided the basis for revising the survey questionnaire form employed in this study (cf. Appendix G: Survey Form (American English Original)).

As a result, the fundamental perspective undergirding this entire effort is its concept of intercultural competence, briefly defined as: **". . . a complex of abilities needed to perform *effectively* and *appropriately* when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself."** The notions "effective" and "appropriate" are equally important because they acknowledge both "etic" and "emic" perspectives – that of self and other, so important in intercultural work, while also reducing problems of self-report by including the views of both sojourners and hosts regarding outcomes.

This brief definition, of course, masks over several clusters or components that include:
- various characteristics;
- three areas or domains (i.e., relationships, communication, and collaboration;
- four dimensions (i.e., knowledge, attitude, skills, and awareness);
- host language proficiency;
- and developmental levels.

A comprehensive survey questionnaire form incorporated all of these areas, including an important question often ignored which is the correlation between developing levels of host language proficiency and other areas of second competence development. While everyone agrees that both language and culture are interrelated, interculturalists tend to overlook the relevance of host language proficiency and language educators the relevance of ICC abilities. Creation of the word "linguaculture" (cf: Fantini, IJIR p.149) signals the integrated concept employed in this study and signals an integrated perspective; while use of the ACTFL Language Proficiency Scale (developed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language) is employed to help ascertain how language correlates with and affects ICC development.

The perspectives just cited directly influence our approach to assessment. It is clear that of the various intercultural assessment tools collected and examined, none is based on as broad a conceptualization as presented here. Each tool reflects a slightly differing (and usually more limited) concept, some stressing global knowledge, sensitivity, or skills; with differing purposes in mind; and for use with varied populations. The original Assessment of Intercultural Competence (AIC) instrument (on which the survey questionnaire was based) reflects *all* of the components mentioned in the concept above. Moreover, this expanded concept had already been widely disseminated and widely accepted – at national and international conferences including, for example, NAFTA in 2001 where our invited paper was adopted by hundreds of participating universities; and at another conference sponsored by the Stanley Foundation in 2002 for community colleges nationwide, where it was again adopted and formed part of the conference report (cf. Appendix I: ICC Bibliography).

The fields of service, cross-cultural education, intercultural communication, assessment (especially, "outcomes assessment"), and research (utilizing varied modes) have produced much relevant information over the past 25 years (cf. Appendix I: ICC Bibliography). A Canadian study by Daniel Kealey, for example, was especially helpful despite a narrow focus on the performance and effects on Canadian technical advisors in intercultural situations. Many other researchers have also investigated study abroad programs; and, a few addressed service projects, the area most closely related to this project. While useful insights were drawn from these and other studies, the current project remains distinctive because of its broad and inclusive characterization of intercultural competence.

Finally, most research on intercultural outcomes to date has been conducted in English, about North Americans, and reflects a distinctly North American perspective. In contrast, this project

looks at multiple nationalities, using multiple languages, and employs both quantitative and qualitative data.

To summarize, the assumptions and frameworks guiding this project in its design and implementation were:
- the Federation EIL's vision and mission,
- a broad construct of the components of intercultural communicative competence, based on the literature review and our own experience,
- and an assumption that FEIL staff share a desire to improve the quality of their programs and to enhance the positive impact of programs on participants.

And the project plan incorporates:
- quantitative and qualitative research data
- research assistants contracted locally in the three MOs involved, competent to translate and implement the plan in local languages: German, British English, Spanish
- research assistants able to compile and summarize data in country reports
- a local research assistant in Vermont to assist in data tabulation
- and finally, compilations of individual MO findings collected into a final composite reports that permit analysis by sub-groups and globally as well.

3. Project Design

<u>**A. General**</u>

The project design and plan were initially informed by a review of the intercultural literature coupled with our own empirical experience. A search and analysis of other relevant assessment tools provided further basis for creating the survey questionnaire form used in this study. The inclusion of open-ended questions gave respondents an opportunity to contribute additional insights from their experiences and to identify other issues. Finally, personal interviews of selected respondents generated additional data.

A combination of structured and open-ended processes resulted in producing quantitative and qualitative data regarding program participants in three MOs – Ecuador, Great Britain, and Switzerland. Identifying outcomes that converged or diverged regarding the development of participant intercultural competencies and how these experiences affected their lives beyond the program, provided further indicators regarding the furtherance of FEIL's vision and mission. To summarize, the following efforts were central to this study:

1) further refine our notion of intercultural competence – definition, essential traits and characteristics, components and their interconnections, and developmental levels;
2) investigate the role of host language proficiency and its effects on ICC development;
3) advance work on an assessment instrument to monitor and measure ICC development, based on our revised conceptualization;
4) pilot the instrument in three MOs,
5) learn about the impact of this experience on alumni, volunteers and hosts;
6) compile and analyze survey findings from this pilot survey;
7) finalize the test instrument for future use;
8) and finally, disseminate the results and make the instrument available for use by others .

We were especially keen to learn more about the impact of intercultural contact on sojourners and hosts in terms of how it affected their personal lives – lifestyle choices, values, work choices and their effects, in turn, on others (the multiplier effect) – all outcomes which contribute to and further the Federation's Mission. These efforts are consistent with the movement towards outcomes assessment emerging over the past two decades.

<u>**B. Timeline and Stages**</u>

This Project was designed to fit within the work schedules of participating MOs to ensure maximum cooperation and minimal interference of their office routines. The hiring of a Research Assistant (RA) in each office was planned to avoid placing additional burden on already busy and dedicated staff. The timeline, therefore, was based on administration of questionnaires at critical stages in their program cycles plus time to complete data compilation and summary reports at the end.

The project took place from July 2005 through December 2006 in a series of **four stages**. A **fifth** stage of initial dissemination was included in preparation for stages 6 and 7 which contemplate further dissemination beyond the (funded) research effort itself. These stages involved the following activities:

Stage 1. Refine Research Concept, Method, and Tool (Summer 2005)
        - update research of literature on related research efforts
        - collect and analyze research instruments (existing and new ones)
        - interview civic service alumni for additional input to the concept and tool
        - use above information (plus guidance of psychometric consultant) to finalize the pilot
          research plan and tool
        - transmit the tool to collaborating MOs for translation

Stage 2. Pilot Test: The Survey (Fall 2005)
        - orient MO research assistants (RAs) to the tool and its use
        - Ecuadorian RA administers the tool pre-, mid-, and end of program, and collects
          results
        - British and Swiss RAs administer survey and interview select respondents

Stage 3. Data Compilation and Initial Analysis (Winter-Spring 2006)
        - RAs compile quantitative and qualitative data at national levels
        - RAs follow guidelines to perform initial analysis
        - RAs translate data and results into English and transmit to project director

Stage 4. Further Data Compilation and Analysis (Summer-Fall 2006)
        - review analysis subsets and list findings
        - compile international data and list findings
        - analyze data and summarize in a final report

Stage 5. Initial Dissemination and Refine Assessment Tool (Winter 2006-7)

4. FEIL's Service Programs

Various Experiment MOs have sponsored service programs for many years; however, the entire Federation committed to global service only within the past few years. The result is that all service projects are now coordinated under FEIL's VIP umbrella (Volunteers for International Partnerships). The Federation website provides general information about **VIP's worldwide offerings**. Individuals accessing the website are greeted with the words: "**Willing People – Meaningful Work / Serving the World Community.**" Information is then given about sending and receiving countries, service projects, inquiry forms, a field album, and news. Individual country projects are also listed, followed by a menu of various service projects, host organizations, program components, photographs, finances, and country information. (See: <www.partnershipvolunteers.org>)

In this way, interested individuals anywhere in the world can pursue volunteer service opportunities in areas of education, health, and human service, plus a variety of development projects in 14 countries, with new options being developed. Applicants outside the FEIL network are automatically referred to MOs that are geographically, linguistically and/or culturally close to their own. Applicants are matched with projects according to their skills, interests, talents, and desired **length of service** (from one to twelve months).

Several **characteristics** distinguish FEIL's VIP offering: Aside from service – at its core – participants undergo ongoing pre-departure and in-country intercultural orientation and language study, they participate in a homestay, and they are supervised. Local supervisor-mentors provide logistical, technical, and educational support to ensure a maximally productive experience. Program quality is ensured throughout each of the various components plus ongoing reflection and evaluation. Also provided are:
>
> - opportunities to serve in multi-cultural teams
> - attention to health and safety issues
> - attempts to meet the needs and interests of individuals of varying ages and backgrounds.

With **23 sending** and **14 receiving countries** working with indigenous NGOs and local organizations, VIP exerts a major impact on communities in need and on the lives of participants in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Ecuador, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Ireland, Morocco, Nepal, Nigeria, South Africa, Thailand, and Turkey. Sample projects include:
>
> - Aksay Pratishthan – a center in New Delhi for disabled people
> - the Dhapakjet Health Post – in Nepal where volunteers assist medical staff
> - the Kayamandi Beads Project – for women in South Africa
> - TEMA – a Turkish environmental association

Additionally, sample projects available in Ecuador, the host country used in this study, include:
>
> - CENIT (Center for the Working Female Child)
> - FINE (Foundation for the Integration of Special Children)
> - Santa Lucía Reserve (A community-based conservation organization in the forests of Northwestern Ecuador)
> - La Dolorosa Shelter (Provides education and a home for children whose families are unable to care for them)
> - the Conocoto Rural School (Serves neglected rural communities that lack the most basic health facilities).

Volunteers cover their own travel and expenses; however, efforts are made to keep costs low. Some projects offer accommodations in return for service. Information about scholarship assistance is available by contacting individual sending offices. Indeed, it is VIP's goal to document program outcomes in hopes of increasing private support for scholarships.

5. Participants Involved in This Study

Three Experiment MOs were engaged in this research project: Ecuador, Great Britain, and Switzerland. British and Swiss alumni were contacted to learn about post-program outcomes. Great Britain began its service programs with Ecuador in 2001 and had 18 alumni in 2005; Switzerland began programs in 1998 with over 100 returnees of whom 76 were German-speaking (those involved in this study). Current VIP volunteers (1 Brit and 4 Swiss) and their host mentors in Ecuador were also tracked during this study.

The numbers of individuals who completed and returned survey forms were as follows:

British Alumni Responses	8 of 22 (+5 interviews)
Swiss Alumni Responses	20 of 76 (+1 interview)
Volunteers (at beginning)	3 of 5
Volunteers (at end)	5 of 5 (+2 interviews)
Mentors (of Volunteers) (at beginning)	4 of 5
Mentors (of Volunteers) (at end)	3 of 5 (+4 interviews)
Mentors (Self) (at beginning)	3 of 5
Mentors (Self) (at end)	4 of 5 (+4 interviews)

Interestingly, in the case of Great Britain, completed responses were received from 100% of all participants who actually *received* survey forms. The difference between the numbers anticipated and those who responded was due entirely to an inability of the cooperating office to reach potential respondents due to faulty addresses, or a lack of forwarding addresses. In Switzerland, the reason is less clear given the unfortunate loss of our research assistant (RA) midway through the project and their inability to fulfill their commitment with forms and interviews.

Given these situations, we lowered the quota for RAs in each country to interview only 5 respondents (instead of the original 9). Great Britain came through with the 5 prerequisite interview reports, Ecuador with 5 for mentors and 5 for volunteers, but unhappily, (due to internal administrative difficulties), Switzerland turned in only one interview report of the expected 5, severely affecting our access to the anticipated quantitative data.

6. Research Approach

This Initial Phase Project was undertaken in several stages. To review: first, an update of our existing literature review and refinement of our conceptualization of intercultural competence, plus a search for and analysis of additional recently developed instruments and relevant research projects focusing on civic service. The revised instrument was then organized into a series of scales representing a coherent universe of content with items arranged hierarchically to reflect increasingly deeper involvement. In one scale designed to assess language, for example, the items reflect varying degrees of language use. The scales were developed in this manner to produce reliable measures of constructs with relatively few items per scale (cf. Appendix G: The Survey Form). Even so, the resulting instrument was lengthy and posed a challenge for potential respondents. Although keenly aware of this, we decided to incorporate all items that best address the multiple dimensions of ICC in this initial attempt and subsequently perform an item analysis to identify the most reliable items to include in a shorter form for the follow-on project.

The instrument, as initially constituted, was refined by administering it first to a small number of current and past participants, followed by discussion of their reactions. Once this stage was completed, the questionnaire was finalized for the study and sent to RAs to translate into German and Spanish (for use in Switzerland and Ecuador), and adapted into British English (for use in Great Britain and Ecuador). Translated forms were then translated back into (American) English to provide a two-way check on accuracy, corrected as needed, and final versions were distributed by respective RAs to current and past participants (cf. Appendix G. for a sample of the original version of the survey form in American English). We considered it imperative that recipients be able to complete the survey in their native languages. Questionnaires were sent via email where possible or regular mail, as necessary. Available respondents were then interviewed face-to-face or by telephone to obtain additional information.

Once completed forms were returned, RAs tabulated the data gathered from questionnaires and interviews in their respective languages, following guidelines provided by the project director, and converted results into English. As forms were received in Vermont, they were coded, compiled, and inputted into a single combined set (i.e., the Banner Set). Our statistician then transferred quantitative data into SPSS (the Statistical Package for Social Sciences) for analysis, and qualitative data were separately analyzed directly from the forms themselves. Details regarding these analyses are narrated below.

7. Advantages and Limitations of This Project

A. Advantages

As already stated, this initial Project was envisioned as part of a larger **follow-on research** effort. Although it involved participants from only three countries, it provided a wonderful opportunity to finalize the test instrument and pilot the initial survey. This has helped to advance FEIL's research interests by allowing us to conceptualize, implement, and pilot both the instrument and the initial survey. In a follow-on worldwide survey, FEIL will engage all MOs with the capacity to identify and contact their own alumni.

Two-way assessments (of self and others) like the one used with current volunteers in Ecuador plus their mentors, are also important and unusual. They obtain dual perspectives and permit comparing the views of sojourner and hosts. Even though both parties seldom concur, their differing views are nonetheless instructive. The emic (or host) view of the hosts is seldom addressed in most studies, yet it is an important research dimension and one that we will attempt to get at in more depth in the follow-on study, building on our current experience.

Finally, it is instructive to view data from **multiple groupings** (in this case, the Ecuadorians, Brits, and Swiss) and to compare and contrast results by nationality. Points of convergence and divergence suggest aspects that are "particularist" (pertaining to a single group), while combined data suggest potentially "universalist" aspects (applying widely to many or all groups).

B. Limitations

The Project's limitations were primarily the constraints of **time, resources,** and **staffing**. For this reason, a control group allowing the comparison of results with other populations was not posited. This may be rectified in a continuation study. Possibilities exist for finding individuals not directly involved in intercultural experiences through the local MOs. We would also like to learn more about any potential "indirect" benefits accruing to hosts coming into contact with sojourners.

The Initial Phase Project also faced many **variables** that cannot be completely controlled. In fact, the project's design was both its forte and its challenge: It allowed us to investigate senders and receivers outside of the United States, but also meant working through research assistants at a distance. Obviously, we could not directly supervise administration of the survey form nor the compilation and analysis of initial data in each language involved. We attempted to minimize discrepancies, however, through guidelines and close communication with our in-country assistants.

C. Other

The fact that the study was conducted in **languages other than English** constituted both a strength and weakness. It was a strength because most other studies have been conducted in English; we need to learn more about what transpires to others and in other languages. The major study cited earlier of the Canadian Development Agency regarding the performance of technical advisors (both English- and French-speakers) in various countries where still other languages were in use, is weakened by the fact that interviews and questionnaires were all completed only in English (and, as a sociolinguist, I am keenly aware of the impact that the language medium has

on the results obtained). Clearly, we need studies conducted elsewhere, by others, and in their own languages; but this also comes at a cost. We recognized this and attempted to minimize the downside even while experiencing disappointment with the performance of one of our MOs.

8. Data Compilation and Organization

Before compiling any data, completed forms were coded to protect the identity of respondents: a B or S indicated country of origin, followed by A for alumni, V for volunteer, MV for Mentor evaluations of volunteers, and MS for Mentor self-evaluations, followed by a separate number for each form. Hence, the 8 British respondents ranged from BA1 through BA8 and Swiss alumni were coded with an S + A + number so that the 20 respondents ranged from SA1 through SA20. In contrast, British Volunteers and Swiss Volunteers were coded as BV or SV, Mentors evaluating volunteers as MV, and Mentors evaluating themselves as MS. Since volunteers and mentors completed forms twice (at beginning and end of service), their final evaluations had the additional letters (FE) as a prefix; for example: (FEBV 8) or (FEMS5).

To begin the compilation process, a blank survey form was first reproduced on a web-based survey developed through Perseus Express, <http://express.perseus.com/perseus/asp/login.aspx>. Data from completed forms were then entered into the master Perseus form in each category. The result was an electronic composite ready for transfer into a second program designed to facilitate statistical analyses – the SPPS or Statistical Package for Social Sciences. At this point, data were now ready for quantitative analysis, discussed in the next section.

Qualitative data, on the other hand, required some additional preliminary steps given that information was given by respondents in their native tongues: For this reason, data were initially compiled by local RAs who then translated and forwarded data summaries in English to Vermont. The translated data were treated first as **sub-sets** by country and category of participants (alumni, volunteers, mentors) and subsequently compiled and analyzed where needed as composite **international samples** that eventually provided the responses to our research questions. Presentation and discussion of qualitative data follows the quantitative section and is found in section 10 below.

9. Quantitative Analysis and Discussion

A. Overview

Data collection, compilation, and organization resulted in a small sample for use for statistical purposes. Although this limitation affects any generalizations that might be construed, we were quite mindful of the various views and positions published about the effects of sample size in restricting certain analytical options. The result was the elimination of two data sets from the statistical analyses – those for volunteers and mentors in Ecuador, leaving them instead for qualitative scrutiny only. Where British and Swiss alumni are concerned, however, the combined sample totaled 28, which we used toward accommodating the $n<30$ requirement. Our current statistical analysis then (limited as it was to specific analytical options described in the sections that follow), provided some important exploratory and initial findings, which we believe will help inform our own future research effort and hopefully that of other researchers as well.

Analytical options applied to data derived from this group of 28 alumni included: 1) T-test, 2) One-way ANOVA, and 3) Factor analysis. Following is a description of each:

1) <u>T-test</u> – appropriate where a single interval dependent and a dichotomous independent exist, allowing one to test the difference of means (e.g., to test the mean differences between samples of men and women). The participant's t-test is a parametric test, assuming a normal distribution, but when its assumptions are met, it is even more powerful than corresponding two-sample non-parametric tests. The t-test is appropriate for use where sample sizes are small (e.g., $n<30$), as in this case (cf. Agresti & Finlay 1997).

2) <u>One-way ANOVA</u> – an alternate way to test difference of means between independent samples. The One-way ANOVA design (also known as univariate ANOVA, simple ANOVA, single classification ANOVA, or one-factor ANOVA) deals with one independent variable and one dependent variable. When a dependent variable is measured repeatedly at different time points (e.g., before and after treatment) for all sample members across a set of conditions, the design is called "within-groups" or "repeated measures ANOVA." The object of repeated measures design is to test the same group of subjects at each category of the independent variable (cf. Levin, Irvin P. 1999).

3) <u>Factor analysis</u> – is based on the fundamental assumption that there are underlying factors which are smaller in number than the items presented. These underlying factors are responsible for the co-variation among the items. Factor analysis, like reliability analysis, is an item-based analysis, which makes use of a co-variance or correlation matrix (cf. Kim and Muller 1978). Therefore, fundamental to factor analysis is the item correlation matrix where small sample size is not a sufficient condition to restrict this analysis.

B. Analysis and Discussion

As mentioned at various points, the instrumentation developed and used in this pilot study was based on a strong set of theoretical arguments regarding the nature of intercultural competence. This study provided an opportunity to test empirically the concepts embodied in the instrument. Select analyses were applied to evaluate the instrument and others to interpret the data generated by the instrument: reliability analysis, factor analysis, descriptive statistics, t-tests, and analysis of variance. However, for the moment, limitations of sample size, time constraints for performing

statistical analysis, and other considerations, necessitated focusing quantitative analyses primarily on measuring the instrumentation, the underlying ICC concept through each of its four sub-components (namely, knowledge, attitude, skills, and awareness) and the multiple items within each component (see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Intercultural Competency and Components
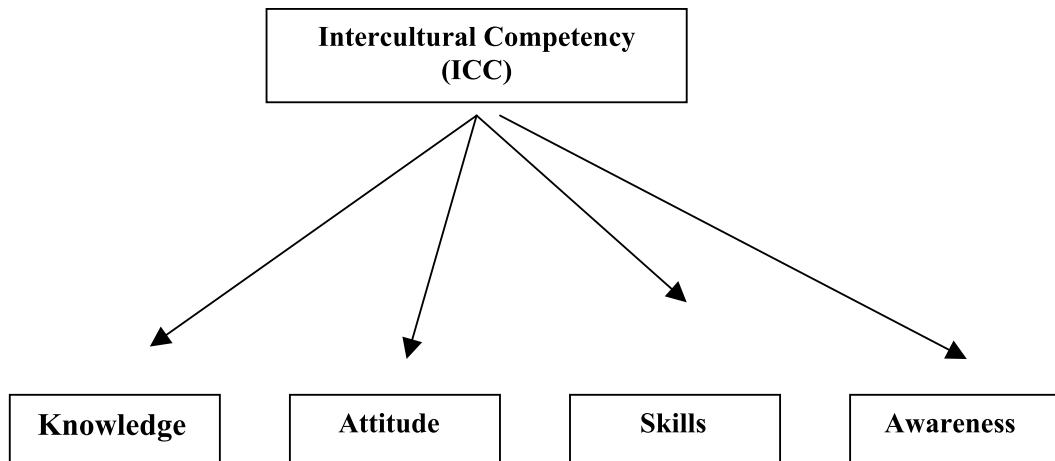
In the 11 Tables that follow, the first 7 examine and assess the efficacy and validity of Part VII of the test instrument regarding its ability to measure and monitor ICC. The remaining Tables, 8 through 11, look at the "means" at the beginning and end of the service experience; i.e., the efficacy and validity of assumptions made about ICC. To reiterate, these analyses are based only on responses from British and Swiss alumni and do not include mentors or volunteers. In general, an Alpha score (i.e., the measure of reliability) of 6.0 or above for any item (some might even say 5.0 or above) is considered a good score.

C. Reliability Testing

Cronbach Alphas were employed to test the reliability of inter-item consistency of the individual items listed under the four ICC components. The resulting scores are reported in Tables 1 and 2 below, for beginning and end of service responses, respectively. It should be noted that reliability and principal component analyses are both item-based, thus reducing any effect normally imposed by small sample size.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis (Beginning of Service)

Intercultural Competency Components (ICC)	Cronbach Alpha	% Component Variance Explained
Knowledge		
Component 1	0.899	68.21
Component 2	0.862	64.81
Attitude	0.984	88.30
Skills	0.966	87.59
Awareness	0.988	68.53
Intercultural Competency (ICC)	**0.824**	**69.53**

Source: Alumni Survey 2006

Table 2: Reliability Analysis (End of Service)

Intercultural Competency Dimensions (ICC)	Cronbach Alpha	% Component Variance Explained
Knowledge		
Component 1	0.870	61.89
Component 2	0.800	53.69
Attitude	0.960	72.90
Skills	0.944	72.85
Awareness	0.968	71.57
Intercultural Competency (ICC)	**0.892**	**85.53**

Source: Alumni Survey 2006

For Tables 3 to 6, Principal Component Analysis with varimax rotation method was used to obtain factor loadings. These Tables provide factor loadings (at beginning and end of service) for each item of the four components of the ICC construct. For the first component "knowledge," principal component analysis suggested two underlying factors. Consequently, the items were then collapsed into two clusters according to factor loadings. In each of the remaining three components ("attitude," "skills," and "awareness"), however, most items loaded onto a single factor. In a few cases, where it was found that items loaded onto two factors at the same time, these items were excluded. Their exclusion led to single component loadings and showed an improvement in the explained variance. Tables 1 and 2 also show the percentage of variance explained by each.

It is important to note that all factor loadings in Table 3 were 0.6 or above, indicating strong associations with the underlying construct. With very acceptable Cronbach Alpha scores of 0.7 or above, the item scores for each ICC component were then added together to compute the needed index. For "knowledge," a mean score of the two clusters cited was used to compute the index.

Table 3: Factor Analysis for Knowledge

Knowledge	Factor Loadings (Beginning of Service)	Factor Loadings (End of Service)
Cluster 1		
I knew the essential norms and taboos of the host culture	0.848	0.838
I could contrast important aspects of the host language and culture with my own	0.875	0.880
I could contrast my own behaviors with those of my hosts in important areas	0.708	0.690
I could cite important historical and socio-political factors that shape my own & host culture	0.771	0.682
I could describe interactional behaviors common among Ecuadorians in social and professional areas.	0.886	0.713
I could discuss and contrast various behavioral patterns in my own culture with those in Ecuador	0.853	0.887
Cluster 2		
I could cite a definition of culture and describe its components and complexities	0.850	0.641
I recognized signs of culture stress and some strategies for overcoming it	0.660	0.870
I knew some techniques to aid my learning of the host language & culture	0.855	0.722
I could describe a model of cross-cultural adjustment stages	0.801	0.741
I could cite various learning processes & strategies for learning about & adjusting to the host culture	0.838	0.743

Table 4: Factor Analysis for Attitude

Attitude	Factor Loadings (Beginning of Service)	Factor Loadings (End of Service)
interact with host culture members	0.867	0.935
learn from my hosts, their language, culture	0.961	0.925
try to communicate in Spanish and behave in appropriate ways	0.939	0.841
deal with my emotions and frustrations with the host culture	0.923	0.782
take on various roles appropriate to different situations	0.925	0.804
show interest in new cultural aspects	0.934	0.929
try to understand differences in the behaviors, values, attitudes and styles	0.985	0.884
adapt my behavior to communicate appropriately in Ecuador	0.975	0.879
reflect on the impact and consequences of my decisions & choices	0.928	0.771
deal with the different ways of perceiving, expressing, interacting, & behaving	0.953	0.762

Note: Items 10, 11, and 13 listed in Part VII of the survey form are excluded

Table 5: Factor Analysis for Skills

Skills	Factor Loadings (Beginning of Service)	Factor Loadings (End of Service)
I demonstrated flexibility when interacting with persons from the host culture	0.900	0.905
I adjusted my behavior, dress, etc as appropriate to avoid offending my host	0.904	0.867
I was able to contrast the host culture with my own	0.822	0.915
I used strategies for learning the host language and culture	0.919	0.866
I demonstrated a capacity to interact appropriately in a variety of different social situations	0.961	0.912
I used appropriate strategies for adapting to host culture and reducing stress	0.918	0.866
I used culture-specific information to improve my style and personal interaction	0.873	0.704
I helped to resolve cross-cultural conflicts and misunderstandings when they arose	0.920	0.772

Note: Items 7, 8, and 11 in Part VII of the survey form are excluded

Table 6: Factor Analysis for Awareness

Awareness	Factor Loadings (Beginning of Service)	Factor Loadings (End of Service)
differences and similarities across my own culture and the host language & culture	0.923	0.865
how varied situations in the host culture required modifying my interactions	0.940	0.841
how host culture members viewed me and why	0.892	0.715
myself as a culturally conditioned person with personal habits and preferences	0.891	0.952
diversity in the host culture (such as differences in race, gender age)	0.950	0.845
dangers of generalizing individual behaviors as representative of the whole culture	0.936	0.876
my choices and consequences (which made me less or more acceptable)	0.939	0.894
my personal values that affected my approach to ethical dilemmas and their resolution	0.932	0.789
my hosts reactions to me that reflected their cultural values	0.968	0.892
how my values and ethics were reflected in specific situations	0.972	0.887
varying cultural styles and language use, and their effect in social & working situations.	0.968	0.759
my own level of intercultural development	0.949	0.896
the level of intercultural development of those I worked with	0.968	0.876
how i perceived myself as communicator, facilitator, mediator, in an intercultural situation	0.867	0.718

Note: Items 2,6,16, and 18 listed in Part VII of the survey form are excluded

Table 7 below shows the results of additional principal component analysis needed to assess if these four components do indeed load onto the single construct defined in this study as "intercultural competence." All factor loadings turned out to be very strong, and therefore indicate a strong association with the defined construct. (Tables 1 and 2 also provide the Cronbach Alpha score and percentage of component variance explained for intercultural competence.)

Table 7: Composite

Intercultural Competency	Factor Loadings (Beginning of Service)	Factor Loadings (End of Service)
Knowledge	0.537	0.896
Attitude	0.871	0.909
Skills	0.944	0.906
Awareness	0.918	0.923

Source: Alumni Survey 2006

Table 8 includes overall descriptive statistics including sample size, mean scores on the four ICC dimensions, and their standard errors. In line with one of the main assumptions underlying this study, the mean scores for the overall ICC construct and its four sub-components do show measurable changes from beginning to end of service during the intercultural sojourn.

Table 8: Descriptive Statistics for Intercultural Competency and its Components

Dimension	N	Beginning of Service		End of Service	
		Mean	St. Error	Mean	Std. Error
Knowledge	28	10.13	1.34	34.14	1.37
Attitude	28	21.86	3.58	42.29	1.70
Skill	28	12.14	2.40	30.11	1.76
Awareness	28	19.29	4.27	52.93	3.09
Inter Cultural Competency (ICC)	28	**15.85**	**2.51**	**39.87**	**1.81**

Source: Alumni Survey 2006

Naturally, care must be taken in overgeneralizing the results observed and reported in this study because of the limited sample size. A somewhat higher standard error in Table 8 is probably indicative of the size limitation. Even so, additional statistical analysis suggests strong support for the main assumptions proposed and tested. Mean scores at the end of service are definitely higher in all four ICC components. On average, subjects showed overall improvement in ICC development, further reflected and supported by the improvements reflected in each of the individual sub-components. An increased sample size in a follow-on study will certainly be helpful toward generalizing these interim results further. [Note: The information shown in Table 8 is more graphically presented in Figures 2 and Figure 3 below.]

Figure 2. Contrastive Mean ICC Scores at Beginning and End of Service
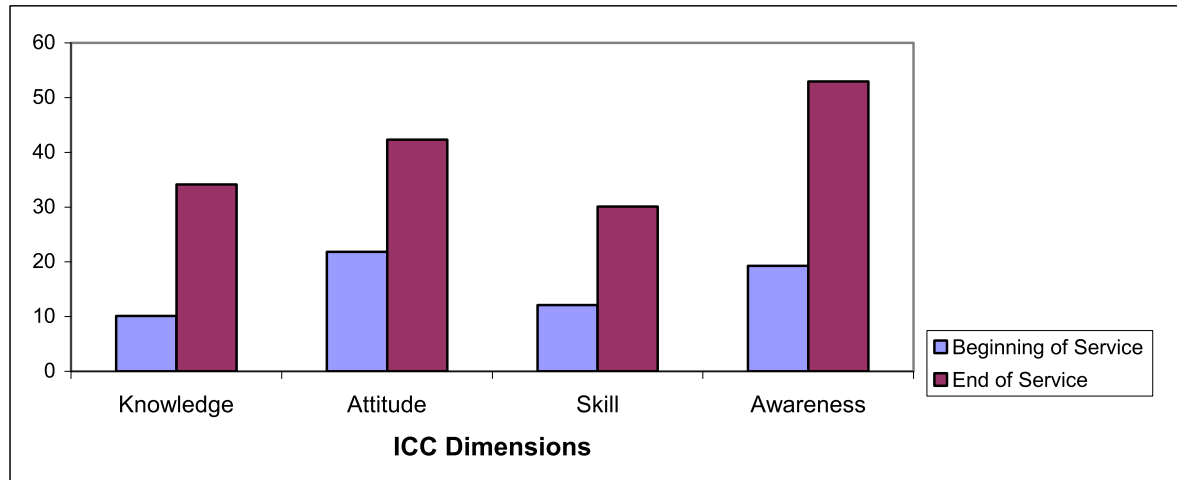
Figure 3. Contrastive Mean Intercultural Competency Scores at Beginning and End of Service
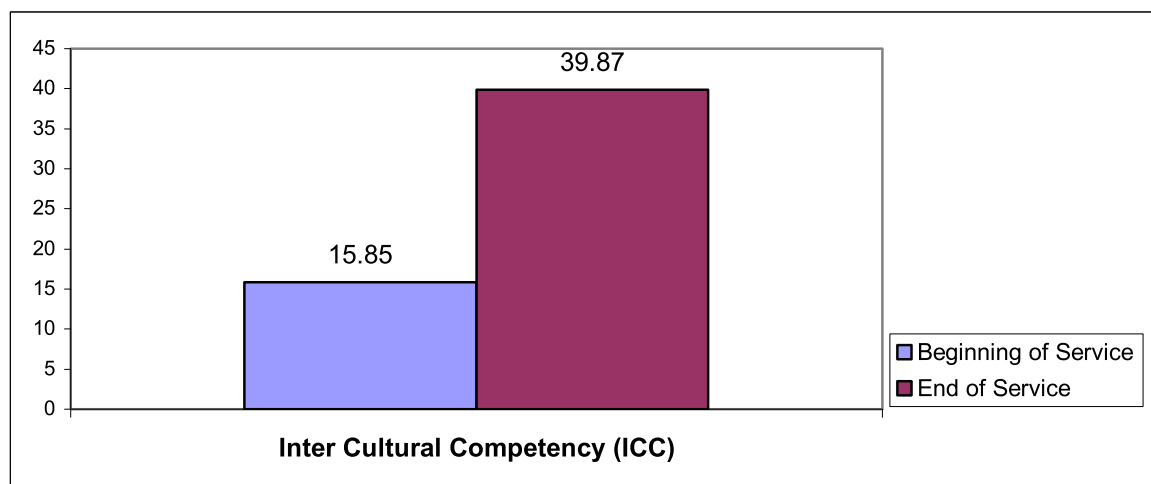
In the next table, Table 9, we see the results of difference of mean t-test when we compare the respondents' assessments of their ICC competency at the beginning and end of their service. In this case, the t-values, significant at $p < 0.05$ (some even suggest < 0.04), confirm that alumni clearly improved in overall ICC development and in its individual components at the end of their service experience.

Table 9: Contrastive Alumni IC Competency at Beginning and End of Service

Component	|T|	Std. Error
Knowledge	12.518*	1.92
Attitude	5.155*	3.96
Skill	6.034*	2.97
Awareness	6.369*	5.26
Intercultural Competency (ICC)	**7.750***	**3.09**

Source: Alumni Survey 2006
* significant at $p < 0.05$

When a dependent variable is measured repeatedly at different time points (e.g., before and after treatment) for all sample members across a set of conditions, the design is called "within-groups" or "repeated measures ANOVA". The purpose of repeated measures design is to test the same group of subjects at each category of the independent variable (cf. Levin, Irwin P. 1999). This, of course applied in the present study. Thus, one-way ANOVA is generally regarded as an extension of t-test. This study only reports the eta squares values in order to document the variation in ICC and its dimensions associated with exposure to a new culture (see Table 10 below).

Table 10: Measuring Effect Size of Intercultural Competency and Its Components

Dimension	Eta H	Squared η^2_p
Knowledge	0.862	0.744
Attitude	0.574	0.330
Skill	0.635	0.403
Awareness	0.656	0.430
Intercultural Competency (ICC)	**0.726**	**0.527**

Source: Alumni Survey 2006

The effects of intercultural exposure at the end of service were further examined by using the analysis of variance to compute partial etas. Etas (η^2_p) show the percentage of variation explained in each of the dependent variables due to a treatment factor (independent factor). In this case, η^2_p shows the effect of having been exposed to a new culture. These effects on each dependent variable are reflected in the reported eta squared values. The effect of exposure to a new culture accounts for 74.4% variation in the knowledge component. Similarly, 52.7% of the variation in ICC is associated with intercultural exposure.

Another important assumption of this study is that participation in an intercultural service experience enhances language proficiency. Table 11 illustrates the levels of Spanish language competency at the beginning and end of service. The majority of alumni reported "no ability" (46.4) or claimed they "were not functional" in spoken Spanish language (28.6) in the beginning. At the end of service, however, significant improvement was reported by the majority of respondents, ranging from "satisfying social and work needs" to "have sufficient accuracy," as indicated in Table 11 and graphically illustrated once again in Figure 3 below.

Table 11: Percentage Responses for Spanish Language Ability

Spanish Language Ability	% Beginning	% End
no ability at all	46.4	0.0
unable to function in spoken language	28.6	0.0
able to communicate in a limited way	14.3	0.0
able to satisfy immediate needs	10.7	0.0
able to satisfy basic survival needs	25.0	0.0
able to satisfy some survival needs	14.3	3.6
able to satisfy most survival needs & limited social demands	7.1	3.6
able to satisfy routine social & limited work requirements	10.7	14.3
able to communicate on some concrete topics	14.3	42.9
able to speak with sufficient structural accuracy	7.1	32.1
able to speak with sufficient structural accuracy & discuss professional areas	3.6	21.4
able to speak Spanish fluently on all levels	0.0	14.3
speaking proficiency sometimes equivalent to an educated native speaker	0.0	17.9
proficiency equivalent to an educated native speaker	0.0	1.0

Figure 3: Improvement in Spanish Language Ability
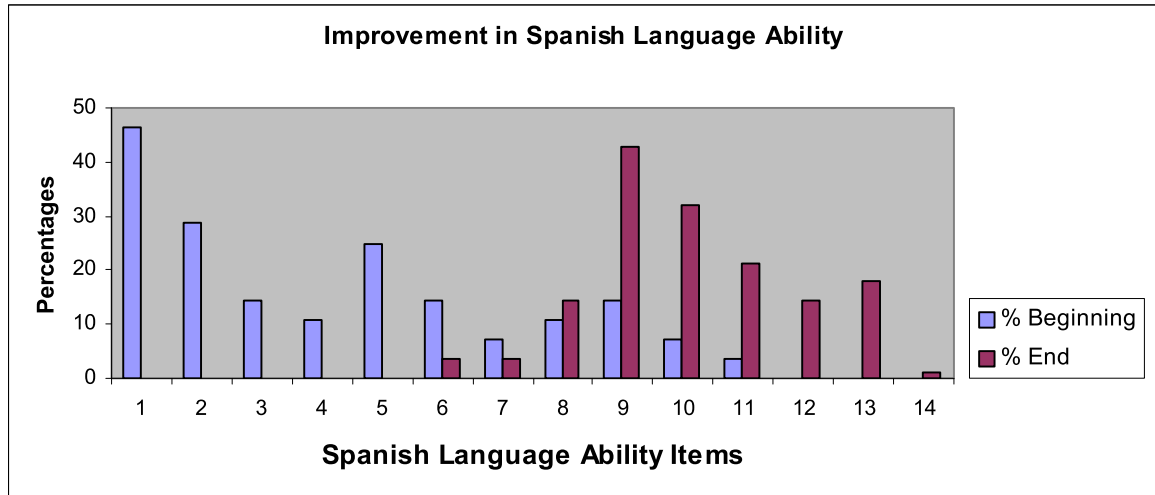
10. Qualitative Analysis and Discussion

Unlike statistical analysis which is concerned with numerical size, qualitative analysis was able to use data obtained from all groups of program participants (alumni, volunteers, and mentors), conducted in two ways (survey and interviews), at various points in time (beginning and end of the program), and from etic and emic perspectives. To keep these two perspectives distinct, the analysis below is in three parts: Alumni and Volunteers, Mentors (about volunteers), and Mentors (about themselves). Before arriving at the composite views presented in this section, however, data were first clustered and analyzed separately by sub-sets to provide information about each nationality group separately. Data were then examined for insights regarding the 10 assertions identified in our original research proposal and listed again below in the sections that follow.

A. Alumni Data

Of a total of 98 alumni (British and Swiss combined), 28 returned the questionnaire and consent forms. The breakdown by nationality group was as follows:

- Of a total of 22 British alumni, 8 responded and 5 were subsequently interviewed. Alumni had participated in programs in the following manner: 1 in 2000 (3 months), 1 in 2001 (7 months), 2 in 2002 (3 months each), 2 in 2004 ((3 and 4 months each), and 1 in 2005 (4 months), and 1 volunteer currently in Ecuador during this study. The remaining 14 alumni were unable to be contacted due to faulty addresses or lack of forwarding addresses. Hence, 100% returns were received from alumni who actually got the forms and 5 respondents were subsequently interviewed by telephone.

- Of a total of 140 Swiss alumni, 64 were French-speakers and were not included in this study. The remaining 76 German-speaking alumni participated in the following manner: 7 volunteers in 1999, 10 in 2000, 19 in 2001, 16 in 2002, 8 in 2003, 12 in 2004, 4 in 2005, (months not indicated), and 5 volunteers currently in Ecuador during this study. Of the forms distributed, 20 alumni returned the form. The remainder were unable to be contacted due to faulty or unknown addresses. Once again, 100% returns were received from alumni who actually got the forms. One individual was subsequently interviewed in person (but, unfortunately, the remaining interviews were not conducted due to administrative problems within the MO).

This summary, then, represents a compilation of qualitative data taken from 28 survey forms and interviews of 6 alumni. During interviews, the following questions were asked:
1. What abilities do you think are important towards intercultural success?
2. To what extent did you develop these abilities? Why or why not?
3. Was learning of the host language important to your success? Why or why not?
4. What impact did this intercultural service experience have on your life?
5. How and to what extent have you utilized any of these abilities in your own life and work?
6. Any additional comments?

About the Alumni (from Part I)

Characteristics of respondents are provided separately by national groups to allow some insight about differences between British and Swiss alumni, particularly with regard to their previous language and intercultural experience.

British Alumni
- all 8 were native English speakers; 1 had a second home language
- 6 were monolingual, 1 listed French (B8), and 1 listed a home language (Gujarati, and some Italian / B6)
- 4 males / 4 females
- all completed 2 years of college or higher
- 4 had a prior intercultural experience / 4 had none
- 6 had a positive experience / 2 gave no response
- 6 continued Spanish language study upon their return
- 1 had prior work in a related field
- 8 developed new intercultural relationships
- 3 now work in a related field / 5 do not
- 5 state they now use their intercultural abilities
- 7 maintained contact with their hosts after their return

Swiss Alumni
- 20 are Swiss nationals / 1 listed other
- 18 are native German speakers / 2 listed Swiss German / 1 listed other
- all are trilingual in German, French, English, and added Spanish / 1 also listed Italian and 1 listed other
- all 20 are females
- all are in their twenties (between 20-27)
- 9 completed high school / 11 completed 2 years of college or higher
- 13 are students / 4 clerks / 4 administrators / 2 other
- 15 had a prior intercultural experience outside Switzerland / 5 listed none
- 18 had prior significant intercultural relationships (friends and work colleagues) / 2 no

- all had positive IC experiences
- 10 continued language study (7 Spanish) upon their return
- 7 pursue a related field of study upon return / 12 no
- 19 developed new intercultural relationships (friends, colleagues, 1 Colombian spouse, 1 boyfriend)

- 6 now work in a related field / 13 do not
- 19 stated that they continue to use their IC abilities
- 19 maintain contact with their hosts (letter, email, telephone, gifts, 4 visits, 2 were visited)

B. Volunteer Data

Volunteers completed survey questionnaire forms twice during their sojourn in Ecuador – at the beginning and again at the end. 3 volunteers returned the survey plus consent forms at the beginning of their sojourn (1 Brit and 2 Swiss). All 5 volunteers returned the survey plus consent forms at the end (1 Brit and 4 Swiss). 2 volunteers were subsequently interviewed. This is the breakdown:

Beginning Evaluations (3)   *End Evaluations (5)*
BV6   FEBV6
(No form)   FESV1
SV3   FESV3
SV4   FESV4
(No form)   FESV5

About the Volunteers (from Part I):

Following are characteristics of the volunteer respondents:
- 1 was a native English speaker; 2 were native German speakers
- all 3 spoke other languages: French (2), English (2), Spanish (2)
- 1 male / 2 females
- educational levels ranged from high school to a masters degree
- 2 indicated a prior intercultural experience / 1 gave no response
- all 3 had a positive experience
- 1 plans to continue language study (Spanish) upon return home
- all 3 developed new intercultural relationships

Volunteers were engaged in several different service projects that included:
- Aliñambi, an organization working with people living in the jungle
- Albergue la Dolorosa, a shelter for low income kids not able to live with their parents
- Escuela Nuestra Señora de la Paz, a nursery home for for low income kids
- Centro Infantil Miquelito, a nursury home for low income kids

C. Assertions

Assertion No. 1: ICC is a complex of abilities

Discussion

The 15 attributes cited in the survey forms (cf. Part II) were based on 138 selected publications addressing intercultural competence (under various related names). These attributes all proved relevant and appropriate to the respondents' IC experiences based on their responses and comments. They left no item blank nor did they discard or otherwise judge any item as irrelevant. The attributes included: tolerance, flexibility, patience, sense of humor, appreciate differences, suspending judgment, adaptability, curiosity, open-minded, motivated, self-reliant, empathy, clear sense of self, perceptive, and tolerance of ambiguity.

To gain some indication of growth and development among the 5 volunteers with regards to these attributes, their ratings were contrasted at the beginning and end of their sojourn (cf. Part II. Personal Characteristics). Responses were limited in number, however, and are based on only 3 respondents at the beginning and 5 at the end of the program (numbers before the slash are beginning indicators / numbers after the slash are end indicators):

(Perception of Self in Own Culture)	□0	□1	□2	□3	□4	□5
1. intolerant	1/4	2/1				
2. flexible				/1	2/2	1/2
3. patient			/1	/1	3/2	/1
4. lacks sense of humour	2/3	/2	1			
5. tolerates differences				/1	1/1	2/3
6. suspends judgment					3/5	
7. adaptable					2/3	1/2
8. curious				1	1/3	1/2
9. open-minded				/1	2/3	1/1
10. motivated					1/4	2/1
11. self-reliant				/2	1/2	2/1
12. empathetic		1		1	/3	1/2
13. clear sense of self				/1	/3	3/1
14. perceptive				/2	1/2	2/1
15. tolerates ambiguity		1		/3	2/2	
16. other qualities (none listed)						

How Perceived in Ecuador	□0	□1	□2	□3	□4	□5
17. intolerant	2/3	1/2				
18. flexible				/1	2/2	1/2
19. patient			/1		2/3	1/1
20. lacks sense of humour	2/3		1	/1	/1	
21. tolerates differences				/1	1/1	2/3

22. suspends judgment   3/5

23. adaptable   /1   2/2   1/2

24. curious   2   /4   1/1

25. open-minded   /2   2/2   1/1

26. motivated   1   1/5   1

27. self-reliant   /1   1/3   2/1

28. empathetic   1   1/1   /2   1/2

29. clear sense of self   /1   1/3   2/1

30. perceptive   /2   2/2   1/1

31. tolerates ambiguity   1   1/1   1/4

32. other qualities (none listed)

Note that items 1 and 4 differ in presentation from the others since both are stated in the negative; other items are all stated in the positive. For example, item 1 (intolerance) remains almost the same with most claiming 0 intolerance (1 initially and 4 at the end, but since 0 is still 0, there is no change). On the other hand, 2 individuals rated themselves at the 1 (or low level of intolerance) at the beginning and only 1 did so at the end; hence a minor shift is noted. Item 4 (lack of humor) can be read similarly: 2 volunteers rated themselves at a 0 level at the beginning and 3 did so at the end; again still 0 and therefore no change. Another rated self at the low level of 2, but at the end only 2 rated themselves at 1 so some slight shift occurred in how they saw changes in their own sense of humor.

All remaining items show a general upward shift on the scale suggesting positive changes in the development of each quality. Of course a better comparison could be made between beginning and end of sojourn had all volunteers completed the entrance form. What is clear, however, is that no volunteer indicated reversal in any attribute. [It should be noted that respondents did not have access to their original assessments when completing end-of-program forms.]

Additional evidence of growth and development is revealed through volunteer comments made in open-ended responses in the forms and in interviews conducted at the end of the program:

Open-ended responses in survey forms
- I now have a more open mind. I'm going to appreciate nature even more. (SV4)
- I always develop and get to know myself better (SV3
- I have new perspectives on issues important in Ecuadorian culture (BV6)
- I improved my language skills
- I increased my confidence in dealing with other cultures (BV6)

Comments made during exit interviews

(BV6+I) "Communication, which means not only to speak but also to listen and watch differences and characteristics of different background people without being judgmental. It is also important to be patient and to understand people from other cultures"
- communication
- watch differences
- non-judgmental
- patience
- understanding

(SV3+I) "(I learned that) the most important thing towards intercultural success is not to be judgmental since many things at the host culture differ"
- non-judgmental
- recognize differences
- reasoning
- patience
- self-development
- independence

Indeed, these comments point to important life lessons: open-mind, appreciation, know self better, new perspectives, language skills, confidence, communication, observation skills, non-judgmental, patience, understanding, reasoning, self-development, and independence. These are insights volunteers say they gained. In the end, all respondents indicated some degree of progress in each area.

A Hierarchy of Attributes?

It seems possible that attributes might be arranged hierarchically in terms of descending or ascending importance; that is, some factors may contribute more than others to IC success. It also seems possible that some attributes may overlap and could be consolidated. The survey form, of course, did not list attributes in any particular order of importance nor has the intercultural literature provided any hint of a hierarchy of attributes. On the other hand, it might be interesting to quantify the number of times attributes were cited by respondents – both alumni and volunteers – in open-ended sections of the survey form and in interviews.

Before attempting to organize attributes in terms of frequency of citation, a cluster analysis would be required. Clearly some terms are synonymous or might overlap in their spheres of meaning. An initial cluster, for example, (to be substantiated at a later time) might be: "openminded, positive attitude, acceptance" or "language, communication," in which cases items could be grouped together. Following this line of thought, here are the results in order of frequency (original attributes from the list are cited in bold; additional qualities cited by respondents are not):

- **openminded**, positive attitude, acceptance, **tolerance** (26)
- people, places, sights, and sounds
- willing to absorb the culture
- willingness to learn
- willingness to try new things (2)
- willingness to interact with people
- be prepared not to demand one's own standards

- not questioning why (acceptance)
- accept differences
- don't expect too much of yourself too soon (a gradual process)
- don't take one's own culture as a yardstick for another
- other cultures not inferior
- take a step back
- can't change things
- don't be a missionary
- become like a native to a certain degree
- don't carry own cultural beliefs abroad
- getting out of one's own comfort zone
- have no expectations (remain open)

- **motivation** (5)
- motivation is the key
- work hard
- not always fun or a holiday
- lots of work and effort
- take the initiative

- new perspectives, observe differences, understanding, sense of realism (5)
- self-development, independence, **confidence (3)**
- **adaptability** (2)
- communication / language skills (2)
- **non-judgmental** (i.e., suspend judgment) (2)
- **patience** (2)
- **sense of humor** (2)
- **appreciation** (2)
- **self-awareness** (2)
- ability to like people and get on with them (1)
- **curiosity** (1)
- reflective (1)

However, before finalizing any hierarchy, we would also need to add results from items checked in the attribute list itself. Of the 15 attributes, alumni most often stressed **open-mindedness**; one stressed **adaptability, curiosity**, and understanding; several others also emphasized qualities of **tolerance** and **empathy**. In Part I, item 36, some added: awareness, understanding, knowledge, acceptance, **tolerance**, and **empathy**. In Part II, items 16 & 32, the following qualities were cited: cooperativeness, stamina, a desire to learn (**motivation**), and language ability (the last two are explored further below). Not specifically cited in open-ended responses were these items from the original list of 15 were the following 3 items: **flexibility, perceptive, and tolerance of ambiguity.**

Findings

All attributes commonly cited in the literature were confirmed as competencies relevant and important to the intercultural experience. All participants indicated they progressed and developed in each area during their sojourn. From among the 15 attributes cited, they highlighted several items in particular, suggesting a possible hierarchy of importance (further research needed). They also identified additional qualities not on our list (cited below), including host language ability: (discussed below under Assertion 2). Hierarchy aside, for the moment we can organize attributes in clusters as follows:

a. attributes cited in the literature (in no particular order):

> tolerance, flexibility, patience, sense of humor, appreciate differences, suspending judgment, adaptability, curiosity, open-minded, motivated, self-reliant, empathy, clear sense of self, perceptive, and tolerance of ambiguity

b. attributes stressed by respondents (in order of importance):

> open-mindedness / positive attitude / acceptance / tolerance
> motivation
> new perspectives / observe differences / understanding / sense of realism
> **self-development / independence / confidence**
> adaptability
> communication / language skills
> non-judgmental (i.e., suspend judgment)
> patience
> sense of humor
> appreciation
> self-awareness
> ability to like people and get on with them
> curiosity
> reflective
> empathy

c. attributes added by respondents:

> awareness, understanding, knowledge, acceptance, operativeness, stamina, and language ability, ability to establish relations, sense of realism

Of course, we can also assume that most individuals already possess many of these attributes to varying degrees even before intercultural contact. Psychologists distinguish between attributes such as traits (innate qualities) and characteristics (qualities developed in specific cultural contexts and experiences). Combining the identification of traits and characteristics with attributes ordered hierarchically in terms of IC success might produce an interesting tool for selection, monitoring and measuring candidates' relative preparedness and development in IC situations (in other words, a normative, formative, and summative assessment approach). Finally, it is surprising that the intercultural literature seldom mentions communication as a criterion for IC success; that is, in terms of specific host language abilities. Clearly it did not go unnoticed by alumni and volunteers (more on this below in Assertion 2).

Assertion No. 2: Learning the host language affects ICC development

<u>Discussion</u>

A marked difference emerged between British and Swiss participants in terms of their previous intercultural backgrounds and experience with second languages. All but one Brit, for example, was monocultural and most had very little Spanish language proficiency at the start of their sojourn (5 respondents had no host language proficiency whatsoever; 3 others listed "extremely low" proficiency, as indicated below:

> - 1 able to communicate in a limited manner
> - 1 able to communicate at a basic survival level
> - 1 with some survival language

In sharp contrast, all Swiss participants were trilingual (German, French, and English), 9 knew no Spanish at the start of their sojourn and 11 listed a range of proficiency levels, as follows:
- 1 able to satisfy immediate needs
- 3 able to satisfy basic survival needs
- 3 able to satisfy some survival needs
- 1 able to satisfy most survival needs
- 1 able to satisfy routine social demands
- 2 able to communicate concretely
- 1 with sufficient structural accuracy
- 1 with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary

By the conclusion of their sojourn, the 5 British volunteers who began with no language achieved some proficiency, and those who began with "extremely low" attained higher levels of fluency. By the end, all attained abilities ranging from "routine social abilities" to "higher levels" of proficiency, as follows:
- 2 with routine social greetings
- 4 able to communicate concretely
- 1 with sufficient structural accuracy
- 1 with structural accuracy plus professional vocabulary

As might be expected, results for Swiss volunteers were even more dramatic, given their previous language experience and trilingualism. By the end of their sojourn, all indicated an ability to communicate in the host tongue, including the 5 who began with "no Spanish" or "no ability at all". All 20 indicated progress in their proficiency levels in the ranges indicated below:
- 1 able to satisfy routine social demands
- 6 able to communicate concretely
- 6 with sufficient structural accuracy
- 2 with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary
- 1 able to speak fluently on all levels
- 3 able to speak sometimes as an educated native speaker
- 1 able to speak as an educated native speaker

Despite greater strides in learning Spanish made by the Swiss, it is interesting to compare their comments with those made by the Brits whose remarks were far more elaborate and enthusiastic, revealing they felt a greater sense of accomplishment. Here's what the Brits said:
- I have more confidence in speaking to new people and also speaking Spanish (BA1)
- I gained more confidence in speaking with Spanish-speakers
- learning Spanish was extremely fun (BA4)
- I learnt a new language, gained a much greater sense of perspective on all aspects of life, and an understanding of a different culture….I continue to have Spanish lessons…and I continue to be fascinated by Latin American culture…
- I realize I am not the typical volunteer; on the plus side I could bring a great deal of maturity to the experience; on the negative side, language ability reduced my communication skills…. In most instances, I was able to find someone who wanted to practice their English in order to find out more about the culture. I am very curious and asked lots of questions. I look upon Ecuador as my second home
- The language tuition focused on speaking, which was good as this is the part of the language most needed day to day… (BA8)

In contrast, only 4 of the 20 Swiss commented at all and only 1 expressed any surprise at the progress made (as though it was expected they would indeed learn the language):

        - I am still working on my accent (SA1)

        - I was surprised at how quickly I learned Spanish (SA4)

        - I learned more Spanish with my host family and friends than in the course (SA6)

        - I am now pursuing a Masters in Spanish literature and linguistics (SA10)

Aside from the levels of host language proficiency they attained, alumni also gave significant testimonies during interviews which speak to how they viewed the relevance knowing the host language with regards to intercultural adjustments. Key ideas are listed following each narrative below:

(BA1) "Learning the host language was vital to the success of my trip. I had learned Spanish at school so I had some basics before arrival. I was grateful for the 4-week individual language course and felt this really boosted my confidence. The host family did not speak any English so I had to communicate straight away. This I was able to do by putting simple sentences together but as the weeks went by I became much more confident in talking to my host family and co-workers on the project. Part of my project duties were to guide visitors around the sanctuary, so I also needed the language for that.

- vital to the success of trip

- grateful for the language course

- boosted confidence

- family did not speak English so had to communicate straight away

- able to talk to host family and co-workers on the project

- duties included guiding visitors around in Spanish

(BA3) "Language is definitely important as you are closed to both communication and the culture if you don't speak the language. It is the main medium for everything else. At first, I was hindered by a lack of Spanish but the language did come quickly. I thought the Spanish lessons were excellent."

- definitely important

- otherwise closed to communication and the culture

- the main medium for everything else

- hindered without the language

- language is the key to everything

(BA4)

- if younger, learning the language was vital to success of visit

- also tried English with anyone willing

- also relied on other volunteers to translate

- would have enjoyed the experience even more if spoke more Spanish at every opportunity

(BA6)

- studied more than required from course so I could speak more quickly

- important to have basic language skills

- smiled, laughed and used hand gestures

- willing to be corrected, wouldn't take offense

- language contributed greatly to the overall success of the program

(BA8) "I really really wanted to learn Spanish well, so I made a real effort to speak Spanish even when the other person spoke or understood English, as I knew that if I reverted to speaking

English all the time whenever I could, I would never had made progress so fast. . . Learning the host language is definitely important to success. If you don't speak the host language you miss out on so much. It's all part of the experience and makes the whole thing much more enjoyable. If you can't understand what people are saying to you it gets frustrating and boring for both parties. Language is the key to understanding the culture."
- motivation, really wanted to learn Spanish
- made a real effort
- host language important to success
- otherwise you miss out on so much
- it's part of the experience
- makes the whole thing much more enjoyable
- otherwise, it gets frustrating and boring
- language is the key to understanding the culture
- learning Spanish has opened up a whole new world of opportunities and experiences
- impossible to immerse myself in the local culture with being able to speak
- would probably have been ripped off all the time too

(SA14)
- host language very important
- enables one to take part in conversations
- improved to level of political discussions
- important in order to communicate and to understand people
- otherwise nuances get lost
- in contact with Quechua but didn't learn it
- people who did not speak Spanish were not integrated or were excluded from conversations
- English sometimes used as a means of communication

Summary

For the plurilingual Swiss, learning the host tongue was assumed. Since all of them had already acquired three languages, learning a fourth was a natural (and perhaps easy) progression, in contrast with the monolingual Brits who were amazed that they could indeed learn and indeed communicate in another tongue (their first time). Given this background (and the insights typical of multilingual individuals), learning Spanish was expected and it is interesting that the Swiss focused their comments more on details of how they learned and of improving accent rather than marvel at their accomplishments. Overall, the Swiss achieved higher proficiency levels than their British counterparts (of whom only 2 achieved levels of "structural accuracy") while 5 of the Swiss volunteers exceeded this level.

Aside from proficiency, all alumni gained important insights about the significance of being able to speak the host language and its relevance to their experience. Here's what 6 Brits and 1 Swiss said in their own words during interviews (combined and consolidated where possible):

(BV6+I) "Communication, which means not only to speak but also to listen and watch differences and characteristics . . . helped in many ways, especially with my family. At the beginning, I felt as a child because I wouldn't understand most things. This wouldn't let me know how to react before many different situations that changed as I got more experienced in the language and culture. Learning of the host language helped me overcome this ambiguity."
- communication helped in many ways
- helped to know how to react in different situations
- learning host language helped overcome ambiguities

(SV3+I) "(Language) important to have intercultural success. . . . It would have been impossible to perform my duty without Spanish. . . . if I hadn't been capable of communicating with (the kids I worked with), my work would have failed."
- important to intercultural success
- impossible to perform my duty without it
- if not capable of communicating, my work would have failed

-language is the key to everything, to communicating and understanding the local culture, to overall success (7)
-it opened a new world of opportunities and experiences (1)
-language was vital/very important to my success (7)
      (things) changed as I got more experienced in the language
      it boosted confidence
      was the main medium for everything
      enabled me to take part in conversations
      helped in many ways, helped enjoy the experience (4)
      helped overcome ambiguity
      allowed integration/not excluded
      otherwise, closed to communication and culture
      am grateful
      able to talk to hosts and co-workers
      able to perform job
-hindered without language (1)
      felt like a child
      wouldn't understand most things
      my family did not speak English
      impossible to perform without language
      otherwise tried English when possible (2)
      otherwise work would have failed
      relied on others to translate
      smiled, laughed, and used gestures
      otherwise would miss out on so much, frustrating, boring (2)
      would probably have been ripped off
      otherwise nuances get lost
-and I studied more than required so I could speak
      willing to be corrected
      really wanted to learn
      made a real effort

Their grasp of the relevance and importance of speaking the host language is eloquent, insightful and this from even those who were initially unsophisticated with foreign languages. Their thoughts derive not from linguistic study but from their own field experiences. They state not only why knowledge of the host language was important to success but they also speak to limitations imposed without it. And, finally, given this realization, they comment on why both the positive and negative aspects motivated them to work even harder to develop proficiency.

The quest to correlate increasing levels of proficiency with potentially increased IC competencies remains an intriguing area of investigation, sorely overlooked by researchers in both language education and the intercultural field. More work needs to be done to establish this relationship

and the effects one has on the other. Although at first glance, a correlation may seem intuitive, the connection between both needs to be made explicit (especially given that ironically so many prominent (American) interculturalists – in my own direct experience – are themselves appallingly monolingual; this, despite their years of prominence, research, publications, and international travel. Also, what might be the implications of this clarification toward preparing future intercultural sojourners in terms of both program development and requirements? Can the intercultural sojourner transcend his/her native worldview without also having struggled with the process of entering another tongue? Or, is it adequate for interculturalists only to "know" other worldviews intellectually and vicariously, but not also experientially? The language-culture-worldview nexus raises many important yet fundamental questions.

What does seem clear is that a total lack of any proficiency in the host tongue most certainly constrain one's entry, adaptation, and understanding of the host culture on various levels and in many ways (unless, of course, one assumes all interactions occur through English, even though this is not qualitatively the same); while increased host language proficiency must certainly enhance entry possibilities albeit not an absolute guarantee of success since other factors also come into play (cf. articles in Appendix I: ICC Bibliography by Fantini on *Language, Culture & Worldview*; and Bennett on *Fluent Fool*, both in *New Ways of Teaching Culture*.).

Finally, language proficiency aside, much is yet to be said about the participants' awareness and development of alternative communicative styles (cf. Part V), another important contribution to expanding communicative repertoires, which goes beyond linguistic proficiency to embrace the interactional patterns that form part of all communicative acts.

Assertion No. 3: Intercultural experiences are life-altering

Discussion

British alumni described changes they experienced through their comments in open-ended sections of the survey questionnaire form; for example:

(BA1) "I have more confidence in speaking to new people…."

(BA2) "More open minded and tolerant of other cultures, more politically aware of South American politics and issues."

 (BA3) "I do not think it would be an over exaggeration to say that I returned a completely different person. I was more relaxed, more confident, sharper fitter and healthier. I had learnt a new language, gained a much greater sense of perspective on all aspects of life and an understanding of a different culture…."

(BA3) "Empathy towards other countries. More motivated to immerse in other cultures."

(BA4) "It was one of the most important experiences of my life because I went at the age of 60 to a country I had never visited with a language I did not know and whose customs I was unfamiliar with on my own after nearly 40 years of marriage doing most things with my husband."

(BA8) "…I have become more confident and understanding, patient and flexible."

The Swiss participants expressed similar thoughts through comments they also made in open-ended sections of the form; for example:

"we now have many friends from South America and other intercultural couples"

"I've become more adventurous; I have new contacts with people from Latin America"

(SA1) "I have learned to switch between two cultures"

(SA1) "try to act to the degree possible in a less ethnocentric way"

(SA1) "more zest for life and equanimity, new interests and abilities; I have made new friends"

(SA1) "I am coming to grips with living in a country in South America. I learned to behave appropriately"

(SA1) "I'm now planning to carry out my field studies in Ecuador"

(SA2 & SA8) "I've become more spontaneous, calmer, and more even tempered"

(SA3) "now working in a development organization"

(SA4) "The experience means a lot to me – the independence and the new environment as well as the lively and warm people have made me perk up. I can't remember having sensed anything as a constraint. Quite the contrary, I could unfold and enjoy life. I have learned a lot and the stay has done me a lot of good."

(SA5) "learned how to find one's way in a different world; to approach other people"

(SA5 & SA8) "There are many things which I don't take for granted anymore, such as warm water in the shower, heating"

(SA6) "I can better understand their attitude on Switzerland and I can also deal with it better"

(SA6) "My stay in Ecuador has changed me a lot. I'm fascinated about the country, the people, the culture, and the landscape"

(SA6) "After returning to Switzerland, I kept talking about Ecuador and I wanted to go back there as soon as possible. I have learned a lot about myself. This journey has stamped my life in many ways"

(SA8) "I've become more patient"

(SA8 & SA14) "I was shocked about the wealth in Switzerland and about the fact that people are still not happy with it. I have realized that things with material value cannot replace inner contentedness. One cam be happy with less goods"

(SA9) "now working in Ecuador"

(SA9) "learned to express her feelings better"

(SA9) "I've become more expressive when it comes to my feelings; I've learned to accept things which I don't know"

(SA9) "my situation in life has changed with my boyfriend from Ecuador; I now have a third home country"

(SA9, SA8, & SA14) "to appreciate my own country and also to appreciate others"

(SA12) "I learned a lot about myself during the time in Ecuador; this journey has stamped my life in many ways"

(SA15) "I gained a lot of new experiences, understanding for other ways of living, other cultures"

(SA15) "a sad insight that basically one cannot make the world a better place; one cannot really change things"

(SA16) "I appreciate it much more that I'm so happy and that I have everything I need and want. I try harder not to throw away any food"

(SA19) "I think above all I learned a lot of new things about myself. In the beginning, I thought that I could adapt completely to a totally different way of life and get used to living that way also. With time, I had to admit that that isn't so easy. I did not have enough time for myself while living with the family and I did not like it at all that you cannot move freely all day in the city itself – a luxury that is practically never taken from me at home. I am still just as curious as I was before my stay, and will also take advantage of the next opportunity to get to know other cultures. I think that I also now have very different expectations about countries that I will visit in the future, because I now have an idea how it might be. When I went to Ecuador, I only had a limited idea about the country's politics and history, but otherwise I knew so little that I held no expectations about my visit."

(SA20) "I do not get stressed as quickly now . . . and I don't let myself be bothered by other people . . . . One learns to appreciate the advantages in Switzerland (infrastructure, cleanliness, less poverty)"

Additional insights about the impact of this experience on their lives were derived from comments made during interviews of both alumni and volunteers:

(BA1) "It is no exaggeration to say that this project has impacted on my life totally. In the future, after completion of a university degree, I plan to return to Ecuador and my future career will be based within the environmental sector. I feel that the whole experience in Ecuador has given me so much more confidence in my own abilities."
- impacted on my life totally
- I plan to return
- future career based on experience
- increased confidence in my own abilities

(BA3)
- returned a completely different person
- gained a much a greater perspective on all aspects of life

- gained an understanding of a different culture
- a much greater global outlook
- increased confidence
- a life-changing experience (B4)
- I feel stronger, know I can make it in another country
- more confident

(BA6)
- has broadened my horizons
- gained empathy about how difficult life can be for others
- am mindful to be helpful and courteous with those with disabilities
- gained extra confidence

(BA8)
- it has changed my life
- I went for 3 months and stayed for 1-1/2 years
- also traveled in Latin America and want to go back
- it has changed me as a person
- broadened my horizons
- great on my CV and led to other interesting jobs

(BV6+I)
. . . had many abilities before the project. These were theoretical and I was able to put them into practice . . very different from my previous experiences. I increased my interpersonal skills, which I didn't know much before going to Ecuador. Helped know many aspects of my life on a deeper level."
- put the theoretical into practice
- increased interpersonal skills
- helped in many aspects of my life on a deeper level

(SV3+I)
- became more patient (used to lose his temper)
- less judgmental
- growing as a person
- strengthened his personality
- learned alternative ways

Summary

What is abundantly clear from comments made by all alumni is that the IC sojourn was indeed both a powerful and provocative experience that affected them and their lives in a great variety of ways and on many levels – in behavior, personality, abilities, and characteristics, in addition to KASA aspects (more on this later). They commented in various ways on how the experience "has changed my life." They gained in self-confidence, became more open-minded and tolerant, developed language skills, and even improved in health! They also made new or different life choices upon return home (more on this later too). This item relates to Assertions 4, 5, and 7, and is discussed again in more depth below.

Assertion No. 4: Participant choices during the sojourn produce certain intercultural consequences

Discussion

Participants expressed varying levels of motivation and interest before arriving in Ecuador and most indicated even higher levels upon arrival, with motivation continuing to increase mid-way and at the end of the experience. On a scale from 0-5 (from none to extremely high), the Brits ranked their motivation at the end of the experience in the following manner: 1 at 3, 2 at 4, and 5 at 5, while the Swiss ranked theirs as 1 at 3, 2 at 4, and 17 at 5. Of the total 28, then, 23 ranked their motivation at the highest possible level while only 2 ranked their motivation at a mid-point and 4 ranked their motivation as high.

One might expect participants in a volunteer program (involving a self-selected group who made and pursued a specific choice) to have high motivation and interest before arriving in-country and, in fact, most indicated even higher degrees upon arrival in the host culture. These attitudes continued mid-way and at the end of the experience. One might also expect that these attitudes were important toward sustaining them throughout the experience and helped them through admittedly difficult times (culture bumps). For example, despite the fact that all expressed high motivation and interest, half of the participants also admitted to difficult challenges at times and to occasional low points during their stay, such that they:
- sometimes wanted to return home
- felt not learning very much
- felt forced or obliged to adjust
- tried to survive as best they could

These thoughts were offset by the fact that all participants, from a medium to high degree, also:
- desired to get along well
- desired to adjust as best they could
- admired hosts so that they worked to become as bilingual and bicultural as
  possible

These latter thoughts are reminiscent of contrasts between the so-called instrumental and integrative types of motivations. Clearly, volunteers were mostly inclined toward the latter, resulting in their willingness to learn and adapt, and in positive feelings about their experiences. Here are some of their thoughts in their own words:

(B4)
- feel gratitude for own standard of living back home
- I now make more generous donations to support these efforts

(B6)
- am more appreciative of what I have at home
- gained insight into the less privileged
- grateful for free state care in the UK

(B8)
- developed friendships, now have friends all over Latin America
- none of this would have happened if I hadn't gone to Ecuador, learned Spanish, and immersed
  myself in the life there

Summary

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Civic programs naturally attract volunteers with high degrees of motivation. They seek the experience, undergo selection, pay a sum of money, travel half way around the world, and brave the challenges of participating in another linguaculture. Indeed their motivation must lean more toward the integrative than the instrumental type, which means that sojourners desire to go beyond mere acceptance. As a result, they seek to emulate their hosts and work toward higher degrees of bilingualism and biculturalism than might otherwise be possible by others within the same timeframe. Integrative motivation does more than sustain them through difficult and challenging moments. It gives them pleasure in "becoming" like their hosts and "becoming" part of their society and culture – certainly not a disposition shared by all who enter other cultures. They undergo voluntary acculturation and welcome efforts by their hosts to "assimilate" them. The result, at whatever their level of attainment, is a satisfying, rewarding, and enriching experience in which the positive aspects far outweigh the negative, as they perceive them. They seek to move beyond the "etic" and into an "emic" posture insofar as possible. They transcend and transform their native paradigm as they seek to grasp another. This is probably the height of that experience one commonly hears about from such individuals returning from an intercultural journey: They learned a lot about their hosts and the host culture, and they learned even more about their own.

These are all reasons successful intercultural sojourners seek to perpetuate and extend this significant, provocative, and "life-altering" experience even after it has ended and they return home. They reflect these sentiments through their own words and actions. After re-entry, 6 of the 8 Brits spoke of the positive nature of their experience, 6 continued to study Spanish, 8 developed new intercultural friendships, 3 now work in related fields, 5 continued to use their intercultural abilities, and 7 maintained ongoing contact with hosts in various ways. And, after returning home, all 20 Swiss spoke of their experience in positive terms, 10 continued to study another language (7 in Spanish), 7 pursued a related field of study, 19 developed new intercultural relationships, 6 now work in a related field, 19 continued to use their intercultural abilities, and 19 maintained contact with hosts in various ways – by letter or email (19), occasional phone conversations (12), exchanging gifts (6), return visits (4), and receiving their hosts as visitors in Switzerland (2).

Assertion No. 5: All parties in intercultural contact are affected to some degree and in various ways

Discussion

From survey responses and comments made in interviews, it became apparent how civic service volunteers were affected by their intercultural experience. They described the experience as life-changing – they learned more about others, about the world, and about themselves. They developed new knowledge, skills, positive attitudes, and awareness (cf. Part VII). This was obvious in the section above and carries over into this area as well. Comments like those below reflect the on-going nature of the experience even after the program has long since ended:

- I will be in touch with my hosts for many years to come
- I returned to Ecuador with husband
- I maintain regular contact with my host family
- I am still in contact with hosts even after 5 years
- host family also visited them in the UK

Summary

How volunteers were affected is abundantly clear from the comments cited here and those above. How mentors (and other hosts) were also affected will become apparent in later sections that deal with responses obtained from the Mentor survey forms.

Assertion No. 6: Service programs offer unique opportunities for sojourners and hosts, beyond traditional educational exchanges

This assertion was not adequately explored in the survey; no specific questions addressed this area. The implications of the assertion are also not entirely clear. Possibly more on this later.

Assertion No. 7: People are changed (presumably in positive ways) as a result of this experience

Discussion

Responses provided in Part I of the survey provide insights in this regard. For example, the following are based on comments made by British and Swiss alumni:

- absolutely all alumni stated that they had had positive IC experiences
- 16 continued language study (13 in Spanish) upon returning from Ecuador
- 7 pursued a related field of study upon return
- 1 remained in Ecuador to work in another capacity
- 27 (i.e., all but 1) developed new intercultural relationships (friends, colleagues, a boyfriend, a Colombian spouse, and 2 by hosting visitors from abroad
- 10 now work in a related field or in intercultural or multicultural settings
- and all cited a variety of ways they continue to utilize their newly developed intercultural abilities such as a desire and interest to learn more about other cultures, respect for diverse perspectives, increased intercultural understanding, enhanced communication skills, and continued use of Spanish

Others commented that they:
- developed an ability to make friends quickly and easily
- confidence to go to a country and survive
- learned salsa dancing, a great social activity
- realized how privileged we are in the UK
- learned to make the most of every opportunity
- appreciate more what one has, one's own country
- got to know another part of the world
- can more easily approach people from a different culture
- accept how other cultures function differently
- more open to accept differences (even among the French-Swiss)
- more open to new things
- adapts more easily
- more easy-going (e.g., accepts restructuring at work)

Comments made by volunteers in interviews at the end of their program reinforced many of the same ideas made by alumni who had already returned home:

(BV6+1)

- experience very enjoyable
- now thinks more about her own culture and its components
- knows more about Ecuador and South America
- changed my point of view
- has new perspectives of life
- plans to keep in touch with host family and friends
- plans to help her place of work
- wants to keep the closeness she learned in her own family

(BV6+1)
- developed intercultural abilities important for her future
- overcame ambiguity
- able to adapt to new culture
- helps to understand foreign people in own country

(SV3+I)
- has grown in many ways
- views things differently
- develop higher level of consciousness and awareness
- learned to live with less materialism and luxury

(SV3+I)
- helped to get to know himself on higher level
- knows his life will change back home
- more aware of the world
- won't be as self-centered
- will appreciate everything back home more

Summary

One way of summarizing comments about their experiences was to note that even when alumni admitted to challenges and difficulties, they expressed no truly negative comments about the experience or its effects upon them. All is about growth, development, expansion, opening, learning, changing. And, despite occasional comments about what they learned about Ecuador, a preponderant amount of comments was really about themselves and their own societies – not unusual for intercultural sojourners who, while learning about others, are surprised by how much more they also learn about themselves.

In the end, self-awareness is perhaps the most powerful change that takes place and something that continues to serve participants for the rest of their lives. Many believe that self-awareness is the most important aspect of human development. Perhaps for this reason it is at the center of the world's great religions: "know thyself," and at the core of a Freirian approach to education: "conscientização." Interviewees became more self-aware of their own beliefs and limitations. They were now more grateful for what they have at home and they broadened and deepened their perspectives about themselves, others, their government, country, etc.

Assertion No. 8: Some returnees lean toward specific life choices, life partners, life styles, values and jobs as a result of this experience

<u>Discussion</u>

Evidence for this assertion is somewhat limited at the moment. This may be attributable to the fact that, except for one, alumni were all young adults (between the ages of 19-28) and have yet to make such choices. The sole exception, an elderly woman of 63, obviously already made these choices and would be unlikely to change at this point. Nonetheless, numerous indicators suggest that the alumni were (re)oriented as a result of their experience.

All but two returned to their previous home situations (1 Brit and 1 Swiss) -- one British volunteer remained in Ecuador because she enjoyed the experience so much and is currently employed at the Embassy in Quito as did also one Swiss volunteer. Of the returnees, one Swiss alumna stated that she was pursuing courses related to her recent experience, many others are pursuing further language study (Spanish or another language), still others are pursuing related fields of study, and several were contemplating intercultural careers. One returnee said she had chosen her career path before Ecuador but that the experience confirmed her choice and made her more excited and prepared for her chosen field in environmental studies.

Other indicators were expressed through comments made in open-ended sections of the survey form and in the interviews that followed:

The Brits:
    (B1)
    - retained language ability and plan to revisit Ecuador
    - reinforced my decision to follow a career in the environmental section (as per my
      project in Ecuador)

    (B3)
    - mentoring, coaching 7 English people and 1 person each from France and Germany
      at work
    - often encounter people at my firm from other countries and go out of my way to
      welcome them using their own language
    - would like to take a career break so I could volunteer again
    - my company offered me the chance to travel to another country
    - want to work in South America

    (B5)
    - psychologist for offending behavior programs, working with about 10 persons per group

    (B8)
    - gave direction to my career and life
    - went traveling throughout Latin America on my own
    - I began teaching English, gave private lessons, worked for a filming company
    - also as journalist, editor for a tourism website
    - then worked as assistant in Embassy

And the Swiss:
    - I will take advantage of the next possible opportunity to get to know other cultures
    - pursuing a Masters degree in Spanish literature and linguistics (S10)
    - international relations (S5)
    - course on project management in intercultural fields (S6)
    - school for health and social work (S15)

- political science, general linguistics (S4)
- cultural anthropology (S3)
- now working for EIL Ecuador (S9)
- international relations, planning to work for an international relief organization (S5)
- development cooperation (S3)
- promotes intercultural programs to people from Ecuador (50 people) (S9)
- teaching language to a lady from Albania (S15)
- my husband is Colombian (S6)
- we have now many friends, intercultural couples, people from South America (S6)
- new contacts with people from South America (S6)
- want to discover the whole world (that's why I'm working at the airport) (S10)
- I recently conducted a fundraiser for scouts (S16)
- I have made many new friends (S15)
- I now have a third home country (S9)
- I'm planning to carry out my field studies in Ecuador (S1)
- helped me to accept the job in the French part of Switzerland

Summary

Although the mostly young adult population under study was still too young to have made many important life choices with regards to career, marriage, and life styles, it is evident that they generally adopted a particular life "orientation" that built on their sojourn in Ecuador. Despite definitive evidence for this assertion at this point due to age, many other important changes of course did occur, as reported above in Assertion 5 above. Other indicators also pointed to their current newfound intercultural dispositions, such as:
- interest in further developing language ability
- plans to return/work/stay in South America (6)
- influenced or confirmed decision about career (17)
- mentoring, coaching, welcoming foreigners/diversity (5)
- interest in travel, getting to know other cultures (5)
- engaged or married a South American (2)
- new friends from South America (4)

Clearly, their interests in learning other languages, foreign travel and work abroad, meeting foreigners, getting to know other cultures, marrying someone from abroad, and wanting to make new friends from other cultures, were all consistent with individual who have undergone intercultural experiences and were affected in positive ways. No comments suggested retreat or withdrawal from intercultural contact; all comments pointed in the direction of wanting to expand further what was already experienced.

Assertion No. 9: Alumni often engage in activities that impact on others

Discussion

Of 28 alumni, 2 indicated involvement in an intercultural engagement or marriage, 4 indicated the pursuit of related studies, 10 indicated that they now work (or plan to work) in related fields (3 of whom work or plan to work in Ecuador), and 18 indicated involvement in activities where they utilize their intercultural abilities to advantage. Examples (the number following in parentheses indicates how many others are being impacted):
- an intercultural marriage and an intercultural fiancé (2)

- pursuing course work or degrees in Spanish literature and linguistics, international relations, and project management in intercultural fields (?)
- teaching or mentoring immigrant co-workers (2)
- providing psychological counseling in a prison (9)
- doing charity work (?)
- working at the British Embassy (15+)
- careers in health and social work, political science, general linguistics, and cultural anthropology, and development cooperation (?)
- plans to work for an international relief organization and another to study in Ecuador (?)
- promoting intercultural programs to people from Ecuador (50 people)

Summary

Although the number of persons they affect or will affect in the future is difficult to calculate, it is clear that all of these alumni are having an impact on others, especially in fields like teaching, counseling, health, social work, development, and service. Although not startling in terms of numbers, several indicated some multiplier effects with 2, 2, 8, 9, 15+ and 50+ persons being affected in the cases cited, totaling 86+ persons presumably benefiting from abilities the alumni developed during their service experience. Several other respondents did not indicate the number of persons they work with in four areas, so there is no way of truly calculating these effects. Despite this, it remains clear that many others are also affected by returnees from intercultural service programs.

Assertion No. 10: These activities further the organizational mission

Discussion

The organization's vision and mission statements read as follows: "From the beginning, our vision has been one of world peace. Our mission is to help build it. Guided by our values and animated by our sense of purpose, we attempt to demonstrate that people of good will and commitment to the fundamental dignity of human life can be a powerful light in a world too often darkened by humankind's failure to recognize its own humanity. The people we serve are forward looking, seeing the world not only as it is, but as it could be: they have chosen to be agents of change. And like those who have worked to develop the organization over the past seven decades, their ideas taken no account of, nor are they bound by, political borders or geographical boundaries. Rather, ours is a world bound only by a common humanity."

As an acknowledged leader in international, intercultural education, service, and development, The Experiment maintains both academic and project capabilities dedicated to promoting intercultural understanding, social justice, and world peace. Since its founding in 1932, its values have become ever more relevant in today's world, and its programs have grown in scope and intensity. Through distinctive methods based on experiential approaches to education and training and the integration of theory and practice, the Experiment Federation's diverse programs are designed to provide life-changing experiences that develop intercultural competencies, create leaders, contribute to global development, and effect positive change.

Summary

The approach to developing world peace, one person at a time, follows Ghandi's challenge when he said: "You must be the change that you wish to see in the world." In other words, change

occurs from the inside out. FEIL programs help this to occur in the context of providing quality intercultural programs, including some with a service component. All of these experiences include selection, orientation, language study, a homestay, and usually an additional component. In FEIL's VIP Programs, this component involves participation in a service project. Most importantly, each individual intercultural sojourn is done in-country *on that culture's own terms*. This means that participants go to learn in the way of the culture of the host society, requiring the development of an emic approach.

The findings in this study reinforce numerous anecdotal and statistical reports accumulated over three-quarters of a century. While learning about others, participants also learn about themselves. Because the nature of intercultural encounters is always provocative, it promotes deep introspection and reflection. Rarely does one return with more stereotypes or intolerant attitudes. And learning about others provides new vantage points for learning more about oneself. The returnee typically remarks: "I learned so much about Ecuador, but you know what? I learned even more about myself." Looking out is looking in. Understanding and changes of perspective occur for most and, as a result, they return home deeply changed.

The intercultural experience normally constitutes the most profound educational experience of their lives. And changed participants return to live their lives differently, affecting others in the process. And, in so doing, they are moving in the direction of the institutional vision and mission. This is what one sees consistently throughout all of the reports provided in this study.

D. The Host Perspective

As previously stated, mentors completed two types of survey forms: 1) about their views of volunteer performance (Mentors/Volunteers or MV) and 2) about their own development (Mentors/Self, or MS). In the first case, of 5 supervising mentors, 4 completed questionnaire forms at the beginning of the volunteers' programs, 3 at the end, and 4 gave personal interviews (+I). This summary examines mentor views of volunteer performance.

Assertion No. 1: ICC is a complex of abilities (Important attributes)

Discussion

Mentors described volunteers at the end of programs in the following ways:

(FEMV1+I)
SV1 was initially impatient, became more adaptable, now a more open person. She is now
- respectful
- patient
- reflective
- gentle
- caring

(FEMV3+I)
SV3 was initially very judgmental, criticized a lot, noted many problems, didn't share the way he handled the problems, intelligent. He now
- has his character well defined (set in his ways?)

<div style="text-align: center;">- learned to be more tolerant with different ideas and situations</div>
<div style="text-align: center;">- more reflective before taking an action</div>

(FEMV4+I)

SV4 is

    - very active

    - very helpful

(FEMV5+I)

BV6 was very patient, adaptable, humble, and a hard worker. She now

    - continues to have these same abilities

    - developed them to a higher level

    - especially patient

    - does good work

    - considers the needs of others before her own

Mentors confirmed several of the attributes cited in the literature (i.e., those with numbers in parentheses):

- tolerance (1)
- flexibility
- patience (3)
- sense of humor
- appreciate differences
- suspending judgment
- adaptability (1)
- curiosity
- open-minded
- motivated (1)
- self-reliant
- empathy (1)
- clear sense of self
- perceptive
- tolerance of ambiguity

In addition, they cited several additional qualities:

- respect (1)
- reflective (2)

They also cited several individual qualities about specific individuals, all positive and one negative (i.e., set in his ways):

- gentle (1)
- caring (1)
- active (1)
- helpful (1)
- humble (1)
- set in his ways (1)

<u>Summary</u>

By completing all items in Part II of the survey form and leaving none blank, mentors acknowledged all 15 attributes listed. In open-ended interviews, they spontaneously confirmed 5

and they identified 2 others not on the list. They also cited several positive and negative individual qualities without generalizing about them. Comparing comments between volunteers and hosts raises intriguing new questions: Are the qualities cited as important to ICC success viewed in the same way by sojourners and hosts? Do they share the same order of importance? Are any qualities which hosts consider important not considered in the same way by sojourners (and interculturalists), and vice-versa?

Assertion No. 2: Learning the host language affects ICC development
(About learning the host language)

Discussion

Spontaneous comments made by mentors concerning language and communication were:

(FEMV1+I)
- helps to understand the situation on a deeper level
- allows her to comprehend better
- to be less judgmental

(FEMV3+I)
- this is one of the most important aspects
- necessary, works with kids who speak only Spanish

(FEMV4+I)
- learning the host language is really important
- otherwise would need to find alternate ways to communicate which would be difficult

(FEMV5+I)
- fundamental to success
- admires volunteers who come and learn a new language

Summary

Whereas the question regarding the significance and necessity of learning the host tongue may be discussed by language educators and interculturalists from an etic view, it is interesting to learn about this issue from the hosts point of view, especially when the hosts are themselves monolingual. From the mentor perspective, it was obvious that they all viewed volunteer knowledge of their language as important – "one of the most important aspects" and "fundamental to success." "It is necessary to life and work; one cannot function without it." Aside from practical aspects of speaking the host language, the volunteers' ability drew admiration thereby enhancing how hosts viewed volunteers even further.

Assertion No. 5: All parties engaged in intercultural contact are affected to some degree and in various ways (Impact of ICC contact on mentors) Also:
        Assertion No. 3: Intercultural experiences are life-altering
        Assertion No. 4: Participant choices during the sojourn produce certain
        intercultural consequences
        Assertion No. 6: Service programs offer unique opportunities for sojourners and

hosts, beyond traditional educational exchanges
Assertion No. 7: People are changed as a result of this experience
Assertion No. 8: Some returnees lean toward specific life choices, life partners,
life styles, values and jobs as a result of this experience
(Use of ICC Abilities in My Own Life and Work)

Discussion

Here's what mentors said during interviews (Is) regarding the impact of this experience upon volunteers, as they saw it:

(FEMV1+I)
- the volunteer faced many difficult situations and overcame them
- has been very helpful
- strengthened her vocation
- now sure about direction chosen for her life
- she's more aware of problems in the world
- will help her in her future job
- learned new aspects of health care systems
- learned to deal with bureaucratic issues

(FEMV3+I)
- has become more open
- will help his personal development
- now has more expectations about life
- more open
- got to know new people
- experienced new things
- life changed without a doubt

(FEMV4+I)
- more awareness of differences
- more open-minded

- helped her on many different levels
- changed attitude
- will be a helpful person throughout life

(FEMV5+I)
- will try to help poor people in her own country
- a changed person
- will want more different experiences
- more aware of own values

Summary

It is clear that mentors felt that volunteers were impacted in many positive ways – in areas of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and awareness – and they noted how volunteers had changed, expected volunteers to pursue their life choices more effectively, and to be helpful to others.

The mentors also appreciated the contributions of volunteer to their projects:

- the volunteers stay for short periods of time
- experience with volunteers is excellent
- have low budget and can't hire adequate staff
- volunteers are a great help

Given low budgets and inadequate staff, volunteers provided much needed assistance. The mentors' only complaint was the short duration; but, all in all, they were "a great help."

E. The Mentors

Finally, what about the host mentors involved in this study? Did interaction with foreigners also affect their lives and work in any way? The impact of intercultural contact on those who never leave home is seldom part of research and it is examined here. Of 5 supervising mentors, 3 completed survey forms about themselves at the beginning of contact with the volunteers, 4 completed forms at the end, and 4 were interviewed in person at program end. This summary explores the impact of this experience upon the Ecuadorian counterparts.

About the Mentors/Self (MS)

The following information was summarized from Part I of the survey form:

- all 4 mentors were female
- their ages were 35, 43, 55; 1 did not answer this question
- all were Ecuadorian monolingual Spanish-speakers
- 3 were college graduates and 1 held a doctoral degree
- they worked in civic service for 3, 12, 15, and 25 years
- 3 had never been outside of Ecuador, 1 in Bolivia

Summary

In summary, all mentors were well educated and dedicated to civic service. All were also monocultural and monolingual in Spanish notwithstanding their experience with indigenous peoples who were often Quechua speakers. Only 1 traveled outside of Ecuador to neighboring Bolivia.

Assumption No. 1: ICC is a complex of abilities

Discussion

In discussing their own attributes required for their work, mentors cited the following qualities:

(FEMS1+I)
- respect
- willingness to adapt
- understanding differences
- patience
- reflection
- problem solving
- to see our reality

(FEMS3+I)
- know the host language
- without it, communication impossible
- willingness to help
- sharing

(FEMS4+I)
- be active
- willingness
- attitude
- creativity
- communication
- developing relationships

(FEMS5+I)
- openness
- interest
- relationships
- knowledge of local culture
- knowledge of host language

Mentors confirmed nearly half of the attributes commonly cited in the literature (i.e., those with numbers in parentheses):
- tolerance
- flexibility
- patience (1)
- sense of humor
- appreciate differences (2)
- suspending judgment
- adaptability (3)
- curiosity (1)
- open-minded (1)
- motivated (1)
- self-reliant
- empathy (1)
- clear sense of self
- perceptive
- tolerance of ambiguity

They also cited several additional qualities they considered important:
- respect (1)
- reflective (1)
- problem solving (1)
- host language / communication (4)
- attitude (1)
- creativity (1)
- relationships (2)
- knowledge of local culture (1)

Summary

By completing all items in Part II of the survey form and leaving no item blank, mentors acknowledged all 15 attributes. In open-ended interviews, they spontaneously confirmed 7 of them without prompts and they identified 8 additional qualities not on the original list. Among this last group, all 4 cited host language / communication as important to IC success.

Assertion No. 2: Learning the host language affects ICC development
(About learning the host language)

<u>Discussion</u>

Spontaneous comments made by mentors concerning the role of language and communication were:

(FEMS1+I)
- "It is important that volunteers learn Spanish since it makes them more self-confident and helps them communicate in a better way. Working in this environment allows them to learn the language on a deeper level. For mentors, it is very important that the volunteers learn Spanish because with this knowledge they can exchange ideas with each other and this makes their experience richer."

(FEMS3+I)
- "Volunteers tend to communicate in many different ways when they aren't able to express something. When it comes to the working with kids, (language) is fundamental since kids tend to be very curious and volunteers have to find a way to communicate with them."

(FEMS4+I)
- "…learning the language is basic to having a fluid relationship since we (the hosts) don't speak other languages."

(FEMS5+I)
- "…without learning the host language, there would have been a barrier which would have made this more difficult, especially when it comes to this type of work."

<u>Summary</u>

First of all, it is worth noting that both communication and learning the host language were cited by all mentors as important for IC success. This being so, they clearly affect and contribute to ICC development as well. Additional spontaneous comments made by mentors in this regard were:

With language ...	*Without language ...*
- important	- kids are curious
- helps them gain confidence	- hosts don't speak other languages
- improves communication	- without language, a barrier
- allows a deeper level	- would be more difficult
- allows exchange of ideas	
- makes the experience richer	
- it's fundamental	
- basic to relationships	

These comments not only substantiate why they thought knowledge of the host language was important in terms of what they contribute, but they also point to how any lack of host language ability would seriously constrain relationships and interaction, especially since most hosts and mentors don't speak other languages. Oddly, with the exception of only 1 mentor, the others did not reverse this thought to consider their own need or desire to learn another language. However, since only one had traveled to nearby Bolivia and most do not imagine the possibility of international travel, this may explain why they did not see the need to speak other languages (Quechua notwithstanding).

Assertion No. 5: All parties engaged in intercultural contact are affected to some degree and in various ways (Impact of ICC contact on mentors) Also:
  - Assumption No. 3: Intercultural experiences are life-altering
  - Assumption No. 4: Participant choices during the sojourn produce certain
    intercultural consequences
  - Assumption No. 6: Service programs offer unique opportunities for sojourners and
    hosts, beyond traditional educational exchanges

Discussion

Here's what mentors said in open-ended questions of the survey forms (SFs) and in interviews (Is) regarding the impact of their work with the foreign volunteers:

(FEMS1+SFs)
- noted two sides of life (unstructured life of street children/structured life of volunteers)
- respect
- tolerate differences as got to know foreign volunteers

(FEMS1+I)
- "Contact with people from other cultures . . . is an opportunity to meet new people, develop myself, and learn from the volunteers who have different points of view."

(FEMS3+I)
- learned about communication
- strengthened relationships I had due to contact with Vs

(FEMS3+I)
- "Sharing a new culture is important. While working with volunteers, I constantly learn to collaborate with them and this helps me to work better. This also helps me to know them (foreigners) better and be more open to them. There are some (customs) that volunteers don't share (with us since) they haven't lived our reality. As they get to know this reality better (through language), they tend to adapt better to this situation."

(FEMS4+I)
- "This experience has helped me to recognize many differences between our cultures and theirs: the way they live, the way they dress, and the things they eat. I find (the volunteer) also very curious about other cultures. She told me this experience has made her want to travel and get to know other cultures on a deeper level."

(FEMS5+I)

- "This contact has allowed me to understand volunteers better and to become friends with them. Outside the work environment, I have become more open."

(FEMS5)
- learned from contact with Vs
- became more understanding
- more open
- more tolerant
- has helped me with my daily tasks

Summary

Intercultural research generally focuses on the sojourner – on those traveling to a new environment. However, their presence among their hosts most certainly must also have some affect on people they interact with. It is clear in this case that the monolingual-monocultural mentors have been challenged through this IC contact even while remaining at home. As a result, they too have grown although perhaps not in all the same ways (e.g., language) nor to the same degree.

Mentors specifically cite the following effects on themselves:
        - derived insights by comparing
        - developed respect
        - opportunity to meet new people / develop relationships (2)
        - learned about communication
        - opportunity to develop myself
        - constantly learn from them (3)
        - this helps me to work better (2)
        - became more open (3)
        - helps me to recognize differences among cultures (2)
        - learned of the impact this experience has on them
        - helps me to understand (2)
        - to become friends
        - to become more tolerant

It is clear that host mentors were impacted in various ways through interactions with the volunteers – in areas of knowledge, attitudes, skills, and awareness. ICC contact has the potential to affect both/all parties in the interaction – volunteers and hosts alike – whether at home or abroad. The phrase, "looking out is looking in," acquires more meaning when we also include the hosts who through contact with foreigners also began processes of reflection and introspection that might not otherwise have occurred. Hence, the provocative two-way nature of IC contact no matter the setting.

Assertion No. 7: People are changed as a result of this experience +
Assertion No. 8: Some returnees lean toward specific life choices, life partners, life styles, values and jobs as a result of this experience
(Use of ICC Abilities in Life and Work)

Discussion

Mentors speak to these points during interviews in the following ways:

(FEMS1+I)
- "I've been applying these abilities in my work day by day because my job demands this. Respect and openness are the basis of this job since it allows people to respect and care about themselves and these are the values we also try to share with the people who live in extreme poverty. This experience (with the volunteers) helps me to understand many differences among people of diverse cultures and even inside the same culture. On the personal side, this experience has turned me into a more respectful person."

(FEMS3+I)
- "My job involves interpersonal skills, therefore the experience (with volunteers) helps me to know how to get along with people from other cultures. (My experience with volunteers) has helped me to improve these skills."

(FEMS4+I)
- " I use these abilities all the time since I have constant contact with volunteers at work. In my own life, I find that I miss this contact later because we become so close to each other. During this experience, I learned to respect people from other countries on a higher level, avoiding the use of terms such as 'gringo' which offends foreigners and explaining this to those around me."

(FEMS5+I)
- "This experience has helped me a lot and due to this contact, I am now more open-minded when it comes to relationships with people from other countries. I am always hoping to have more volunteers because they have prove to be very responsible individuals."

Summary

It is interesting to note the connections mentors make between their experience with foreign volunteers and what they learned from them, with their own lives and work. They commented on these correlations in various ways:

- I apply this to my work every day
- respect and openness are the values we try to share with the people we work with in
  extreme poverty
- this experience (with the volunteers) helps me to understand many differences among
  people of diverse cultures and even inside the same culture.
- on the personal side, this experience has turned me into a more respectful person
- helps me to know how to get along with people from other cultures
- (my experience with volunteers) has helped me to improve these skills
- I use these abilities all the time
- during this experience, I learned to respect people from other countries on a higher level
- this experience has helped me a lot
- due to this contact, I am now more open-minded when it comes to relationships with
  people from other countries.

Both parties were mutually enriched through contact. Without always realizing it, they had much to offer each other. They both grew and developed and the growth experienced by mentor had direct application to their lives and work.

Assertion No. 9: Alumni (+mentors) often engage in activities that impact on others

As persons involved in civic service, this is the chosen life course for all the mentors.

Assertion No. 10: These activities further FEIL's organizational mission

Mentors, as well as volunteers, contribute to the mission since the service projects fit within the vision and mission of the umbrella organization.

11. Summary and Conclusions

A. Lessons Learned

Numerous insights were gleaned about *process* aspects of this study. These lessons learned will be useful in conducting a follow-on international research project. These were:

- the challenges of collaborative international research efforts on several levels, especially administratively, cross-culturally, and linguistically; despite this, the promises are quite attractive

- working through untrained, non-professional research assistants presents additional challenges in guiding them to ensure their efforts will result in producing reliable results

- contracting and supervising RAs as project employees emerged as a very important factor (as opposed to contracting them through their local MOs) to avoid the difficulties experienced with one MO which actually impeded the RA from performing her tasks

- the need to ensure that the MOs involved have updated alumni files with current contact contact information (and especially email, where possible)

- the challenges, benefits, and necessity of working through local languages (and the native tongues of the research subjects involved) and ensuring that surveys and other documents are properly translated

- the intercultural challenge of designing questionnaires for respondents from a variety of cultural backgrounds who are inexperienced with surveys or hold differing attitudes about participating in them

- the importance of using item analysis to reduce an acknowledged lengthy questionnaire into the briefest possible instrument, yet one that will yield the desired results

- the importance of follow-on interviews toward producing a rich corpus of qualitative data

- the value of combining both quantitative and qualitative data to get complete and accurate results as possible

- ways to use/apply the areas and items identified in the survey towards designing and implementing quality cross-cultural orientation processes for program participants

- helping MOs to fully understand and use implications and applications from research results to enhance program promotion, selection, program design and implementation, and assessment of outcomes

- the significance of academic research toward establishing FEIL's visibility and reputation as "an acknowledged leader in international, intercultural education"

B. Areas for Further Work

Because the data are extremely rich, they have the potential to yield many more insights. Following are questions and areas for possible further analysis:

1) General correlations across and within sub-groups:
    - how do different sub-groups compare in a number of areas; e.g., the Brits vs. the Swiss?
    - what do they share?
    - what comparisons can be made by gender?
    - by age?
    - what comparisons can be made based on length of sojourn?
    - based on previous cross-cultural experiences?
    - based on monolingual vs. bilingual or multilinguals?
    - specific development in each area of KASA?
    - what other etic-emic comparisons can be made?
    - what specific changes occurred in world view?

3) General correlations among mentors (self)
    - comparisons by gender?
    - by age group?
    - development in each specific area of KASA?
    - what etic-emic comparisons can be made?
    - what changes occurred in world view?

Additional questions and areas of interest to explore are:

1) Re assertions
    - which assertions might coalesce (e.g., 3, 4, 5 & 7)?
    - how should assertions be reframed or restated?
    - what new assertions might be added?

2) Re ICC attributes
    - which attributes might cluster or coalesce?
    - is there a hierarchy or order of importance?
    - are attributes viewed the same from etic and emic points of view?

3) Re language/communication
    - how does language/communication transcend/affect other attributes?
    - what is the role of language to ICC development in general?
    - how to use and relate communicative styles to this area (Part V)?

4) Re etic-emic
    - how do volunteer and mentor assessments compare?

5) Re assertion 6 (Service programs offer unique opportunities for sojourners and hosts, beyond traditional educational exchanges)
    - needs more information? or eliminate?

6) Re the AIC instrument
    - perform an item analysis to determine which items to keep, eliminate, or combine
    - revise and shorten the instrument accordingly

Finally, several more charts and graphs may be helpful to further illustrate some of the information above; for example, develop charts of:
- selected assertions
- correlations of attainment of host language proficiency levels with ICC development
- correlations of length of stay with the attainment of ICC abilities
- comparisons and contrasts between Brits and Swiss
- impacts on alumni life choices
- impact of alumni on others (the multiplier effect)
- contributions participants make towards the FEIL vision and mission

C. Questions To Explore with MOs

At the next FEIL GA in Berlin in May 2007, the following questions will be discussed with Member Offices:
- what interest do members have in this effort and its findings?
- how might MOs utilize and distribute these findings?
- what are differences/similarities between academic and marketing research?
- how best to disseminate results to the field ("FEIL as acknowledged leader")?
- other implications and applications for individual MOs?
- what interest do MOs have in an expanded follow-on study?
- what other areas might be incorporated into a future study?
- implications for further work?

D. Dissemination Plan

It is anticipated that these Initial Project findings will be of value not only to FEIL, but to others in the fields of language education and intercultural communication as well as those engaged in student exchange, study abroad, education, business, and government. For this reason, dissemination of these findings is an important aspect of this effort. Several dissemination stages are planned, as follows:

1) Within FEIL

- distribute final report in electronic and hard copy formats
- review findings with FEIL Executive Committee members to explore implications and applications for Mos for marketing, publicity, program development, participant selection, etc. (Winter 2007)
- post on FEIL and VIP websites with links to the World Learning website (Winter 2007)
- conduct a workshop re findings at the FEIL General Assembly in Germany (Spring 2007)

2) Beyond FEIL
- prepare briefs, reports, professional articles, and conference presentations
- identify and disseminate to relevant constituent groups, professional conferences, etc., worldwide
- publish findings and implications in professional journals
- conduct presentations and workshops at various conference presentations (over ensuing 1-2 years, e.g., at TESOL, ACTFL, NAFSA, SIETAR, and others.

- present findings at two conferences co-sponsored by the Global Service Institute: the Center for Social Development and the Civic Service Research Fellows Seminar, and the Youth Service Research Roundtable.

Dissemination, in fact, has already begun and is in progress. The following activities have already taken place:
- 5 Quarterly (interim) Reports already submitted to GSI and others
- presentation at GA Poland, October 2005
- presentation at GA Brazil, April 2006
- presentation and workshop at GA Germany, May 2007
- poster session (& 500 fliers distributed) at ACTFL, Nashville, Tennessee, Nov 15-19, 2006
- presentation at PACE, SIT, December 4, 2006

Other activities that are already confirmed are:
- AAPLAC , Yale University, New Haven, CT, February 2007
- Research Brown Bag Luncheon, SIT, February 2007
- Global Service Institute Conferences, Feb 2007
- JALT, no date yet

And finally, other activities that are currently under exploration:
- SIETAR/Japan, no date yet

Articles are under preparation and are being considered for publication in the following professional journals:
- Foreign Language Annals
- TESOL Quarterly
- International Journal of Intercultural Relations (IJIR)
- Frontiers

Finally, this report is posted on the FEIL and the World Learning Websites (with links to each other). See:

- for the Federation EIL: <http://www.experiment.org>
- for the VIP Program: <www.partnershipvolunteers.org>
- for World Learning: <http://www.worldlearning.org/>